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ABSTRACT

College applicants taking the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the Test of Standard Written English (TSWE) were surveyed regarding the tests, college admission in general, and the communications received concerning the test and their scores. Separate questionnaires were administered before taking the SAT or TSWE, after taking the test, and after receiving the test scores. It was found that the students generally expected to attend a large, public or state-supported institution. Seventy percent of the students reported a choice of college major; frequently named were business and commerce (both sexes), social science (females), and engineering (males). Criteria which students felt should be used for college admission included grades and SAT scores. Before taking the SAT, 56% of the respondents reported nervousness and anxiety. Most students neither enjoyed nor disliked taking the SAT or TSWE; were not surprised with their score; felt that it was fair; and rated the verbal section of the SAT as most difficult. Respondents reported confusion about the colleges' use of test scores, about their percentile rank, and about TSWE scores. When proposed that the SAT should be discontinued, 46% disagreed, 22% agreed, and 31% weren't sure. The questionnaires and results are appended. (GDC)

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SAT MONITOR PROGRAM

High School Students View the SAT and College Admission Process

Report on Wave of Completed Questionnaires Associated with December 1977 SAT Administration

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Prepared for

THE COLLEGE BOARD

TM 008 133

Response Analysis Corporation
Princeton, New Jersey

July 1978

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ABOUT THE MONITOR PROGRAM

Purpose

The purpose of this program is to monitor the attitudes and reactions of students who take the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and the Test of Standard Written English (TSWE) toward these tests and the college admission process generally.

We use the term "program" rather than "study" because the project is conceived as involving periodic measurements. A major purpose of the program is to establish some benchmark data during the first year on key issues and to measure changes in attitudes in succeeding years.

The program also provides flexibility. It is contemplated that some issues may lose their value or currency as time goes by, and new issues may emerge. Under the monitor concept, issues that are no longer deemed worth "tracking" can be dropped and new issue areas phased into the program.

The Monitor System

Questionnaire administration under this program is closely connected with an SAT administration -- an SAT administration being defined as a date on which the SAT is given. Typically there are six administrations in any school year. The monitor program is not necessarily in operation during all SAT administrations, but when it is, questionnaires are administered to samples of SAT takers before the SAT is given, immediately following the SAT, and right after students receive their test results.

It should be pointed out that separate samples are used at these points in time. No selected SAT taker is asked to voluntarily complete more than one questionnaire.

The Method of Questionnaire Administration

The program makes use of mail procedure. Each member of the sample receives a letter from Dr. Marland, President of The College Board, several days before receiving the questionnaire from Response Analysis Corporation. Respondents are asked to fill out the questionnaire and mail it back in a postage-prepaid envelope, to Response Analysis. They also complete a postcard indicating they have filled out the questionnaire and they are asked to mail this back separately.

In order to increase the completion rate, a second mailing of the questionnaire is made to those who fail to return a postcard. The goal is a completion rate of at least 60%, and this was exceeded in the first wave of mail questionnaires (see Appendix for details).

Questionnaire Development

The three questionnaires currently being used in the monitor program were developed by Response Analysis with the assistance of representatives of the College Board and Educational Testing Service.

Questionnaires were pretested at three local high schools -- Trenton Central, Hopewell Valley Regional, and Pennington School -- and changes were made in formatting and content as a result of these pretests.

This Report

The report covers what we call the first wave of interviews; this wave revolves around the SAT administration on December 3, 1977. Questionnaires were mailed to members of each sample segment on:

November 14, 1977 -- Pre-SAT questionnaires

December 5, 1977 -- Post-SAT questionnaires

January 12, 1977 -- Post-SAT questionnaires

A second wave of interviews associated with the May 7, 1978 SAT administration is underway, but data has not yet been processed.

The director of this program is Alfred Vogel, Vice President of Response Analysis. He is assisted by Dr. Herbert I. Abelson, Executive Vice President and Chief Psychologist, and by Reuben Cohen, President and Chief Statistician.

SUMMARY

This section summarizes what we at Response Analysis believe are key findings and highlights from the first administration of the monitor program. From time to time, we make judgments about the data, based on our research experience, and we suggest some possible implications.

This summary follows the organization of the Main Report.

VIEWS OF STUDENTS BEFORE TAKING THE SAT

Preferred Versus Actual Choice of a College

Generally, students would rather go to a large public or private institution than to a small one and students generally prefer a public or state-supported school to a private institution.

Also, students are more likely to think they will attend a large or public institution than a private or small school.

Students from high-income families ($20,000 per year or more) do not differ much from students from low-income families (Under $10,000 per year) in their intentions to attend college.

Do Students Know What They Want to Major In?

A rather large majority, 70%, say that they have a definite or fairly good idea. Overall, students have about as much interest in the social sciences and humanities (history, literature, psychology, etc.) as they do in the physical sciences and engineering. However, there are important differences according to sex -- females are more likely to say they will major in a social science or the humanities, males that they will major in a physical science or engineering.

Among females, the top mentioned subjects are business and commerce, a social science (sociology, psychology, etc.), theater arts or communications, education, and pre-med or health.

Among males business or commerce and engineering are mentioned most frequently as possible majors.

What Are Students' Views on College Administration Criteria?

We gave students a list of possible criteria -- for example, grades in school, SAT scores, athletic accomplishments -- and we asked them three questions:

- How much importance do students think colleges place on these criteria?
- How much importance should they place?
- How well do students think they would do against these criteria right now?

There is little difference between what students' think colleges should place emphasis on and what they think actually happens. In both respects, grades or academic standing are ranked as the number one criterion. SAT results rank second in the "is important" category and third on the "should be important" criteria. Teacher recommendations and impressions students make in an interview with a college representative are also in the top four on both counts.

Factors like being a member of an ethnic minority and the ability of a family to pay for the education rank near the bottom.

Most students think they would do well on all of the top ranked criteria except SAT scores, if colleges were evaluating them now. Over 60% believe that teacher recommendations, grades, and the impression they make in an interview with a college representative would be one of their strong points; few think they would be hurt in these areas. Only 30% say this about their expected SAT score. (Remember, however, these questions were asked before students took the SAT.)

What Are Students' Feelings About the SAT Before Taking It?

Most students, 56%, feel a little nervous and anxious. About a quarter say they are relaxed and comfortable, and approximately one in five is very nervous or anxious. Generally, males are more likely than females to say they are comfortable and relaxed. So, most students are at least somewhat on edge.

VIEWS OF STUDENTS AFTER TAKING THE SAT

How Do Students Feel About the SAT?

So-so. Most students neither enjoyed nor disliked the actual taking of the SAT.

How Fair and Difficult Are the Tests Overall?

Overall, most students say the tests are fair. In fact, the large majority of students rate each segment of the test -- the math and verbal parts of the SAT and the TSWE -- as very or pretty fair.

The verbal section of the SAT receives somewhat more criticism than either the math portion of the SAT or the TSWE as being not too fair or unfair.

Over half the students rate the difficulty of each of the three tests as about what they expected. The verbal part of the SAT receives the most mention as harder than expected -- 34% overall say this. Males, blacks, and Orientals are most apt to express this complaint.

How Fair Are the Different Kinds of Questions in the Verbal Section of the SAT?

There are basically four kinds of questions in the verbal section, and all of these are rated as fair by a majority of students. Yes, criticism does occur, and on some kinds of questions it is quite substantial.

The antonym questions (picking opposites) receive the smallest criticism -- less than one in five rates them negatively. Criticism rises to 27% on questions where students were asked to supply the missing word in a sentence (sentence completion).

Complaints are widespread on two kinds of questions. Forty percent feel the reading comprehension passages are unfair and 37% complain about questions in which the student has to identify the relationship between two words (analogies).

Among ethnic groups, Orientals generally express the most criticism of the verbal parts of the SAT.

Any Problems with the Test Centers Themselves?

Not really. The vast majority of students who took the test other than at their own school found the center they signed up for to be convenient, and had little or no trouble finding the place.

The physical conditions -- lighting, space, restrooms, and temperature -- receive favorable ratings. However, about one in five students complain about temperature.

The large majority of all students say they received clear instructions and that they were treated either courteously or in a businesslike way.

Preparing for the SAT -- What Do Students Do, Does It Help?

Nearly 80% of the students did something to prepare for the SAT.

What most of them did, 63%, was to fill out sample questions in the "About the SAT" booklet. And some students, around 20% or so, reviewed English, math, or test preparation booklets.

Only about one in ten went to a review session at their school and only 3% attended a fee-paid coaching session outside school.

Blacks and Orientals indicate that generally they did more than white and Spanish-speaking students to prepare for the SAT.

Feelings are mixed on whether preparation helps. Nearly one in three says, "yes, helped me do better"; 46%, that it didn't help much, but made me feel less anxious; and 20%, that it probably neither helped nor reduced anxiety.

Do Students Think Test Scores Make a Difference on an Individual's Ability To Do College Work?

Most students don't see much connection between test scores and performance in college. Fifty-six percent say low SAT results don't make much difference; 36% say some, and 8% say a lot.

It's evident that most students think that either the SAT is not a complete measure of students' abilities or that students can, through sheer motivation or willpower, overcome deficiencies that test scores point up.

What Is a Satisfactory Score To Get on the Combined SAT?

About seven out of ten students have an idea of what they would regard as an "okay" score. Among this group, about one in five would be satisfied with a combined (verbal plus mathematical) score of less than 900; 44% would like to score in the 900 to 1,099 range, and 34% would like to score 1,100 or higher.

Orientals and whites tend to have higher SAT aspirations than do black and Spanish-speaking students.

How Do Students Think Colleges Use the SAT and TSWE?

About half the students, 46%, think the SAT is used for both admission and placement purposes; 26%, that it is used for admissions only, and an almost equal number, 19%, that it's used for placement in a math or English course.

Students have a somewhat different perception of the TSWE. Almost half (46%) think it's a placement test, and only 11% that it's used to make admissions decisions; 26% believe it's used for both purposes.

What Factors Influence a Student's Choice of College?

According to students, the most important factor is whether it has good courses in their field of interest. Next most important are the general academic reputation of the school, whether the cost is reasonable, chances of their getting in, and social reputation (good times).

Many students, especially those from low income-homes, indicate they could use more information about financial aid.

VIEWS OF STUDENTS AFTER THEY GET THEIR SCORES

How Does Reality Compare with Expectations?

Not too bad. Most students say they did about as expected if not better than expected on the tests. Some, of course, are disappointed -- 32% say they did worse than expected on the math portion of the SAT, one-third say worse on the verbal, and 26% say worse on the TSWE.

Orientals are most apt to feel disappointed in results in the verbal section of the SAT and the TSWE.

Few students have changed their college plans any as a result of taking the tests. Among those who have changed plans 13% say they have set their sights lower and 3%, higher. Orientals, 24%, and blacks, 18%, are more apt to have set lower goals for the kinds of schools they will apply to than are white and Spanish-speaking students. Also, 20% of the low-scoring students (less than 800 on combined SAT scores) have set their sights lower.

What Should Be Done with the SAT?

Is it a good or poor idea to get rid of it? This question was asked on all three questionnaires. And at all three times, more students said it was a poor idea than a good idea to do away with the SAT -- The margin favoring keeping the SAT is, on balance, about two to one -- around 40% for and 20% opposed.

However, a large number, more than three in ten, don't take sides -- saying that it is hard for them to decide what should be done about the SAT.

Opinions do vary depending on test results. When asked this question after getting their scores, 64 of those with high scores (1,000 or more) said keep the SAT, compared to only 38% among low-scoring students (less than 800).

Those favoring the SAT cite as their main reason that the SAT is an impartial and objective measure of a student's ability.

Those who want to do away with the test mention a variety of reasons -- that some good students do poorly because they get nervous, that the SAT is limited in what it measures, and that it should not be the only consideration (which, though mentioned with some frequency is not exactly an argument for eliminating the test, just for using it properly).

Is the Fee too High?

No, most students think it's reasonable, though one in five thinks it's way out of line.

STUDENT VIEWS OF THE SAT COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM

What Is the Readership of SAT Publications?

In our judgment, readership is only fair -- 52% of all students say they read all or most of the "Student Bulletin," 48%, all or most of "About the SAT and TSWE," and only 32%, all or most of "Your Student Report." Over a third just skim through or read none of the latter two publications.

Readership tends to be higher among blacks and Orientals than among white or Spanish-speaking students.

These publications, generally, are not seen as difficult to understand. The vast majority says fairly or very easy. And most students say they have a fairly good if not an excellent understanding of the various subject areas in the "Student Bulletin." Understanding is weakest on such subjects as the Cumulative Scoring Report and the College Scholarship Service.

The "About the SAT and TSWE" booklet gets considerable credit for improving student understanding of the SAT -- 63% say they have a better understanding now than before they got the booklet. Among ethnic groups, blacks are most apt to feel this way, Orientals least.

Are College Board Materials Seen as Honest?

By and large, yes. On most subject areas, a substantial majority, 60% or more, say they think the explanations they receive are completely honest, and relatively few, 20% or less, say something is held back. This is true of such subjects as:

- What the SAT measures
- Whether you should guess or not
- Purpose and use of SDQ AND TSWE
- How much good it does to prepare for the SAT

On these subjects some students, usually around 15% or so, indicate that they don't know whether the materials are honest or not.

The one subject on which a fairly large number believes information was withheld is how colleges use SAT results. (Recall frrm our discussion of the previous section that there appears to be some confusion in students' minds on whether the SAT is used for admission, placement, or both purposes.)

What About Practice Questions in "About the SAT and TSWE"?

Most students, 60%, say they did all or most of the practice questions; the percent saying this is even higher among blacks and Orientals, who, generally, are the two groups paying most attention to SAT materials.

There is some desire for more practice questions, but it is not overwhelming -- 48% say they would have liked some more questions, but only 9% say there was nowhere near enough.

Yet, filling out practice questions has mixed impact on student confidence. Thirty-five percent say this increased their confidence, 40% that it made no difference, and 25% that it decreased their confidence.

Is It All Right for Colleges to Collect SDQ Information?

Students indicate that it is all right to provide most of the information that goes to colleges they select. Very few students object to purely scholastic information -- for example, grades in school, courses of study, scholastic honors, number of years particular subjects are taken.

However, large numbers of students do object to information on ethnicity (55% oppose this) and participation in church or community affairs (44% opposed). And about three in ten think it's not all right to give information on work experiences, sex, and how students evaluate their various abilities (acting, music, math). Whites are less likely than black, Oriental, or Spanish-speaking students to say it's all right to provide information on ethnicity. There are no differences between males and females on whether it's all right to provide information on sex.

How About Collecting Information for Research Purposes?

Objections to this information -- which is used by the College Board and does not go to colleges -- is widespread.

This is especially true of information on parents' educational achievements: 62% say The College Board should not collect it. Objections are highest among students from families with the lowest educational achievement level, as might be expected.

Almost half object to The College Board getting estimates of parents' income. Resistance here is more from students from upper than lower-income families.

And 35% think it's not all right to collect information about number of financial dependents in the household.

These results suggest that The College Board needs to communicate better on what is meant by "research purposes" and how the information requested is actually used. Many students are nervous about this information.

How Well Do Students Understand the Score Report?

Students have little difficulty with the two basic scores -- their math and verbal SAT results. However, a fairly substantial number, 33%, say they don't understand the TSWE score too well.

Also, quite a few students, 33%, have difficulty with the item showing their percentile rank among freshmen in specific schools, and over a quarter have problems understanding their percentile rank in the national high school sample and among college-bound seniors.

In sum, it would appear that efforts are needed to increase understanding of these scores.

I

VIEWS OF STUDENTS BEFORE TAKING THE SAT

This section covers the questions asked in the Pre-SAT questionnaire except those relating to the written communications from The College Board -- for example, the "Student Bulletin" and "About the SAT." Results on communications issues are discussed in Section IV.

Discussed in this section are such subjects as:

- Preferred versus actual choice of college to attend.
- What subjects students are likely to major in.
- What criteria students think colleges use in admissions, what they think the criteria should be, and how well they would do.
- Students' feelings about taking the SAT.

Intention to Attend College

AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED, THE VAST MAJORITY OF TEST TAKERS EXPECT TO GO TO COLLEGE.

Nine in ten takers of the SAT say they will probably attend college.

There are not any major differences by subgroups (sex, ethnic background, region of the country, family income, etc.)

"At this time, how sure are you that you will attend college?"

	Probably	Fifty-Fifty Chance	Probably Not
All students	91%	7	1
Family Income			
Less than $10,000 per year	85%	13	2
$10,000 but less than $15,000	97%	1	2
$15,000 but less than $20,000	91%	8	1
$20,000 or more	92%	7	*

("No answer" omitted)

*Less than .5%.

Preferred Versus Actual Choice of College

STUDENTS GENERALLY PREFER LARGE SCHOOLS OVER SMALL SCHOOLS, AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS OVER PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS.

The most popular choice, though not by majority, is a large public or state-supported institution. There is a virtual tie for second place involving large private, small private, and small public institutions.

It is interesting that no specific kind of institution stands out as a preferred choice by anywhere near a majority of students.

Adding them up, one can see that 50% prefer some kind of public or state-supported school and 50% large institutions, whereas 37% prefer a private or small college.

Results on the kind of institution students think they will enter are parallel; there appears to be a close relationship between preferred and actual choices.

"If you could go anywhere you wanted, what kind of college or university do you think you would enter or attend initially?"

"What kind of college or university do you think you will actually enter or attend initially?"

Kind of College or University	Preferred		Think You Will Actually Enter	
Two-year community	8%		14%	
Small private	19	37%	11	31%
Small public or state supported	18		20	
Large private	18	50%	8	43%
Large public or state supported	32		35	
Other	3		3	
No idea	1		7	
No answer	1		2	

Where Students Stand Now in the Admissions Process

MOST STUDENTS HAVE NOT SETTLED ON A CHOICE OF COLLEGE.

This questionnaire was completed in November and early December, before the December 3 SAT administration, and most test takers, 690 out of 748, were seniors.

At this time, nine out of ten had not yet been admitted to a college, and among this group, over two-thirds were considering two or more colleges.

"Have you been admitted to a college?"

	All Students
Yes, intend to enter it	3%
Yes, may go elsewhere	6
No	90

("No answer" omitted)

"Which statement below comes closest to summing up where you stand now in your selection of a college?"

	Students*	
I have one school in mind	27%	
Two or three choices in mind	50	67%
Considering four or more	17	
Haven't thought much about it	5	

("No answer" omitted)

*Base = the 96% who have not been admitted or who may go elsewhere.

Do Students Know What They Want to Major In

MOST STUDENTS INDICATE THEY HAVE A PRETTY GOOD IDEA OF WHAT THEY WANT TO MAJOR IN.

About 30% say they have a definite idea and almost four in ten that they have a fairly good idea.

Note that female students are more apt than males to indicate that they have a definite idea of what they want to study.

"Which statement below comes closest to describing how close you are to knowing what you want to study or major in in college?"

	All Students		Males		Females	
I have . . .						
Definite idea	31%	70%	25%	69%	36%	70%
Fairly good idea	39		43		34	
Some idea	17		20		15	
Hardly any idea	8	9%	7	8%	9	11%
No idea	1		1		2	

("No answer" omitted)

Possible Major Fields

FEMALES ARE MORE LIKLEY TO WANT TO MAJOR IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES OR HUMANITIES, MALES IN THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES OR ENGINEERING.

Students were asked which subjects they might major in. Responses have been grouped into five main areas: social sciences and humanities, physical sciences and engineering, business and commerce, education, and agriculture.

Females express a general preference for the social sciences and humanities over the physical sciences and engineering. Among males, it's the other way around. Males are more likley than females to select engineering; females are more likely than males to choose one of the social sciences or education.

Note, however, that an equal number of both sexes, 27%, select business and commerce as a likely major.

There are some other differences worth noting among ethnic groups:

- Black students are more likely than members of other ethnic groups to say they will major in business or commerce.
- Orientals are most apt to say they might go into mathematics.
- Spanish-speaking students and Orientals are more apt than either black or white students to favor pre-med or health.

Possible Major Fields

"Regardless of how sure you are at this time, which of the following subject areas do you think you will major in or consider majoring in?"

	All Students		Males		Females	
Social Sciences and Humanities						
Theater arts, communications	20%		15%		24%	
A social science (psychology, sociology, etc.)	20		13		27	
Art	9		7		10	
English, literature	9		5		13	
Foreign language	7	81%	4	62%	10	96%
History	6		7		5	
Urban studies, architecture	5		7		3	
Religion, philosophy	3		3		2	
Ethnic studies	2		1		2	
Physical Sciences and Engineering						
Pre-med, health	20		16		22	
Engineering	15		26		5	
Biology	15		16		13	
Mathematics	13	86%	16	107%	11	65%
Computer science	11		15		7	
A physical science (chemistry, physics, etc.)	12		18		7	
Business and Commerce	27		27		27	
Education	16		10		22	
Agriculture	8		11		5	

(Multiple responses/"other" and "no answer" omitted)

Students' Views of College Admission Criteria

STUDENTS THINK THAT COLLEGES PLACE THE MOST EMPHASIS ON GRADES AND SAT SCORES WHEN EVALUATING PEOPLE FOR ADMISSION.

The large majority of students, 85%, say that colleges place a great deal of importance on school grades, and about two-thirds believe that SAT results count this much.

There is a considerable gap between the importance ascribed to grades and SAT scores and other factors, but next in importance, according to students, are teacher recommendations, the impression a student is able to make in an interview with a representative of the college, extra-curricular activities, and the academic reputation of the high school.

It should be noted that black students and white students do not differ much on the importance they think colleges place on membership in an ethnic minority group -- approximately 40% of both blacks (40%) and whites (37%) say "great deal" or "fair amount" of importance.

However, around 50% of the Oriental and Spanish-speaking students think colleges place a "great deal" or "fair amount" of importance on this factor.

Students' Views of College Admission Criteria

"Based on the impressions you have formed or what you may have heard, how much importance do you think colleges you are likely to apply to generally place on each of these when evaluating students for admission?"

	Total*	Great Deal	Fair Amount
Grades or academic standing in school	99%	85%	14
SAT results	94%	65%	29
Teacher recommendations	76%	28%	48
Impressions students make during an interview	75%	27%	48
High school's academic reputation	74%	30%	44
Extra-curricular activities (band, drama, clubs, etc.)	69%	16%	53
Athletic accomplishments	60%	14%	46
Recommendations from people other than teachers	54%	11%	43
Family's ability to pay for the education	53%	13%	40
Whether you live in state where the college is or outside it	41%	10%	31
Being a member of an ethnic minority	39%	16%	23
Whether parent went to the school	22%	4%	18

("Not very much," "none at all," and "no answer" omitted)

*The "total" column is the sum of those who said "a great deal" and those who said "a fair amount."

What College Admission Criteria Should Be

STUDENTS VOTE STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF SCHOOL GREADES AS THE MOST DESIRABLE OR NECESSARY CRITERION ON WHICH COLLEGES SHOULD BASE ADMISSION POLICY.

Almost three-quarters of the students participating in the survey say colleges should place a great deal of importance on grades in school. No other factor receives anywhere near this degree of mention.

As might be expected, those who say they are on the top fifth of their class are more likely than those lower down to cite grades as important.

Results on the importance of grades do not vary a great deal by such factors as ethnicity, sex, or family income.

Teacher recommendations, SAT results, and impressions one makes in an interview with a representative of the college follow grades in student rankings of criteria that should be important. Spanish-speaking students are more apt than those from other ethnic groups to say that SAT grades should count at least a fair amount.

What College Admission Criteria Should Be

"How much importance do you think each of these factors should have in the minds of college admissions people when making decisions on whom to admit?"

	Total	Great Deal	Fair Amount
Grades or academic standing in school	98%	73%	25
Teacher recommendations	80%	31%	49
SAT results	79%	31%	48
Impressions students make during an interview	67%	24%	43
Recommendations from people other than teachers	63%	18%	45
Extra-curricular activities (band, drama, clubs, etc.)	61%	12%	49
High school's academic reputation	59%	24%	35
Athletic accomplishments	43%	8%	35
Family's ability to pay for the education	40%	14%	26
Whether you live in state where the college is or outside it	19%	4%	15
Being a member of an ethnic minority	12%	3%	9
Whether parent went to the school	6%	1%	5

("Not very much," "none at all," and "no answer" omitted)

*The "total" column is the sum of those who said "a great deal" and those who said "a fair amount."

How Students Evaluate Themselves on Admissions Criteria

MANY STUDENTS THINK THEY WOULD DO WELL IF EVALUATED AGAINST SUCH CRITERIA AS TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS, GRADES, AND IMPRESSIONS THEY MIGHT MAKE DURING AN INTERVIEW WITH A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COLLEGE.

As one can see from examining results on previous pages, these criteria, along with SAT scores, are the top mentioned criteria both in the sense of items which should be and those which actually are important. Note, opposite, that most students have confidence that they will do well against all these key criteria, except expected SAT results. (Many, though not all, had never taken the SAT, so these individuals had nothing to go on.)

Some of the detailed breakdowns might be worth reviewing:

- Students in the top fifth are more likely than those at lower levels to think their grades will help.

- Orientals have less confidence in their ability to make a good impression in an interview than do members of other ethnic groups.

  Only 31% of the Orientals rate this as a strong point, compared to around two-thirds of the blacks and whites, and half the Spanish-speaking students.

- More Spanish-speaking and Oriental students than black or white students are apt to think that their ethnicity will help.

- Females are more likely than males to view making a good impression during an interview with a college representative and teacher recommendations as strong points.

How Students Evaluate Themselves

"Suppose each one of these factors was being considered by colleges when they evaluate you, how do you think you would come out?"

	One of My Strong Points	Would Help, But Not As Much As Other Things	Do Me No Good
Teacher recommendations	69%	28	2
Grades or academic standing in school	62%	36	1
Impressions students make during an interview	61%	35	3
Recommendations from people other than teachers	58%	37	4
High school's academic reputation	39%	46	14
Expected SAT results	30%	57	12
Extra-curricular activities (band, drama, clubs, etc.)	30%	42	27
Athletic accomplishments	25%	27	47
Family's ability to pay for the education	21%	50	27
Being a member of an ethnic minority	12%	23	62
Whether you live in state where the college is or outside it	*	*	*
Whether parent went to the school	*	*	*

("No answer" omitted)

*Not asked

Feelings Now About Taking the SAT

ON THE EVE OF TAKING THE SAT, MOST STUDENTS ARE AT LEAST A LITTLE NERVOUS AND ANXIOUS.

About a quarter overall indicate they are relaxed and comfortable. Thirty-one percent of the male students say they feel this way; females are less sanguine.

As can be seen from the table below, there is little difference among ethnic groups on this issue. However, note that those who took the SAT previously (31%) were more likely to feel comfortable and relaxed about the up-coming test than those who had not previously taken it (20%).

"Summing it up, how do you feel right now about taking the SAT?"

	Comfortable, Relaxed	A Little Nervous	Very Nervous
All students	24%	56	18
Sex			
Male	13%	55	12
Female	18%	58	23
Ethnicity			
Black	18%	60	20
Spanish	20%	66	14
Oriental	23%	54	23
White	25%	56	18
SAT Experience			
Took SAT before	31%	53	15
Did not take it before	20%	59	19

("No answer" omitted)

What Should be Done with the SAT

AT THIS POINT, BEFORE HAVING TAKEN THE SAT, STUDENTS ARE MORE LIKELY THAN NOT TO FAVOR KEEPING IT.

Over 40% think it would be a poor idea to get rid of the SAT; only one in five thinks this is a good idea. Note, however, that a large number, fully a third, indicates this is a hard thing to decide.

There are no noteworthy differences on this issue by ethnic group, and differences between males and females are not large.

"Suppose there were no SAT or similar tests that were part of the college admissions process -- no tests like these for you to take as one of the things you do when you apply to college. Do you think it would be a good idea or a poor idea to do away with tests like the SAT altogether?"

	Poor Idea	Hard to Decide	Good Idea
All students	44%	34	20
Sex			
Male	48%	35	16
Female	41%	34	24
Ethnicity			
Black	43%	33	21
Spanish	46%	32	20
Oriental	48%	38	12
White	45%	34	20

("No answer" omitted)

Later, in Section III, we will look at reasons students give for their feelings on this issue.

II

VIEWS OF STUDENTS AFTER TAKING THE SAT

This section reviews questions in the second questionnaire which was sent to a sample of students immediately following the December 3 SAT administration.

Included are these subjects:

- Reactions to taking the SAT.
- Fairness and difficulty of the SAT and TSWE, and of various segments of the SAT.
- What the SAT should and does measure.
- Ratings on convenience of and physical conditions at the test centers.
- Preparations for the SAT.
- Questions relating to what constitutes a satisfactory score, and colleges' use of the SAT.
- Financial aid and other factors affecting choice of a college.

Reactions to Taking the SAT

MOST STUDENTS NEITHER ENJOYED NOR DISLIKED THE SAT EXPERIENCE.

Over 60% of the students say they didn't have strong feelings of liking or disliking the SAT. Thirteen percent enjoyed the experience; 12% disliked it.

As the table below illustrates, females may be somewhat more apt to dislike taking the SAT than males.

"What generally was your reaction to taking the SAT?"

	Enjoyed It	Disliked It	No Strong Feelings Either Way	Other
All Students	13%	12	62	12
Sex				
Male	15%	8	64	11
Female	11%	17	59	12

("No answer" omitted)

Fairness of the Tests

STUDENTS TEND TO RATE THE SAT AND TSWE AS FAIR TESTS OF THEIR ABILITIES.

The TSWE and the math section of the SAT are seen as somewhat fairer than the verbal portion of the SAT. However, no test receives extensive criticism as being unfair.

> "The SAT test consisted of two basic parts -- a verbal section and a math section. In addition you took the Test of Standard Written English. Please rate these tests on how fair or unfair you thought they were as tests of your abilities."

	TSWE		Math Part of SAT		Verbal Part of SAT	
Very fair	28%	82%	27%	81%	16%	73%
Pretty fair	54		54		57	
Not too fair	12	14%	16	19%	23	27%
Unfair	2		3		4	

("No answer" omitted)

There are some differences in the reactions of subgroups and those that we think are noteworthy are summarized below:

- The verbal section receives stronger criticism from males than from females, from Orientals than from other ethnic groups, and from those who took the SAT before than from those who did not.
- The math section is criticized as being not too fair or unfair more by females than by males, and by blacks more than by other ethnic groups.
- Orientals are more likely than members of other ethnic groups to complain that the TSWE is unfair.

Difficulty of the Tests

MOST STUDENTS REPORT THAT THE TESTS ARE ABOUT AS DIFFICULT AS EXPECTED, THOUGH A SUBSTANTIAL MINORITY SAYS THE VERBAL EXAM IS HARDER THAN THEY THOUGHT IT WOULD BE.

Substantial majorities of students indicate that all three tests are either easier or about as they expected. However, one in three says that the verbal section was harder than expected.

The math section of the SAT and TSWE, on the other hand, receive about the same amount of mention as being easier than as being harder than expected.

"Now please rate each test on how difficult it was compared to how difficult you thought it would be."

	Math Part of SAT	TSWE	Verbal Part of SAT
Easier	22%	19%	9%
About as expected	55	56	56
Harder	23	20	34

("No answer" omitted)

Again, some differences between groups on a basis of sex and ethnic background may be worth reviewing:

- Regarding the math section, female, black, and Spanish-speaking students are most likely to find it harder than expected; male, Oriental, and white students, to find it easier.
- On the TSWE, males are more likely than females to find it harder than expected, and white and Oriental students are more apt to say it was harder than are black and Spanish-speaking students.
- On the verbal section, male, black, and Oriental students are most likely to say the test was harder than expected.

Fairness of Questions in the Verbal Section of the SAT

THE READING COMPREHENSION SECTION AND QUESTIONS DEALING WITH FINDING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN WORDS BEAR THE BRUNT OF CRITICISM AIMED AT THE VERBAL SECTION.

As we have seen, students rate the verbal section as being generally the most difficult part of the SAT experience.

Students were also asked to rate the components of the verbal section on fairness.

Criticism focuses mainly on two kinds of questions: reading comprehension paragraphs and vocabulary questions in which students are asked to find the same relationship between two words as exists between two capitalized words. Around four in ten indicate these kinds of questions are unfair.

"The verbal section of the SAT had several kinds of questions. Please rate each kind on how fair or unfair you thought these questions were as tests of your verbal abilities in each area."

	Vocabulary: Picking the Opposite of Capitalized Word		Supplying the Missing Word in a Sentence		Vocabulary: Finding Relationship Between Words		Reading Comprehension Passages	
Very fair	26%	82%	20%	73%	11%	63%	16%	59%
Pretty fair	56		53		52		43	
Not too fair	16	18%	24	27%	31	37%	30	40%
Not at all fair	2		3		6		10	

("No answer" omitted)

Orientals are generally more likely than other ethnic groups to rate the various segments of the verbal section as unfair. There are no significant differences in results by sex.

What the Verbal Part of the SAT Does and Should Measure

MOST STUDENTS THINK THE VERBAL SECTION MEASURES AND SHOULD MEASURE THEIR OVERALL VERBAL ABILITIES -- NOT JUST THE ENGLISH THEY LEARNED IN SCHOOL.

Over 60% of the students say the verbal part should and does measure basic verbal skills.

Note, however, that about one in three feel that it should measure knowledge learned in school. Ethnic minorities -- blacks, Spanish-speaking, and Orientals -- are more likely to feel this way than whites are. Forty percent or more in each ethnic minority group say this, whereas only 29% of the white students do.

"Which of these do you think best describes what the verbal part of the SAT test actually measures?"

"Which of these do you think the verbal part of the SAT should measure?"

Verbal part of SAT	Does Measure	Should Measure
Your overall verbal abilities based on all you learned in school or outside it	68%	61%
Your knowledge of English learned in school	19	32

("Other" and "no answer" omitted)

What the Mathematics Section of the SAT Measures and Should Measure

BY AND LARGE, STUDENTS THINK THAT THE MATH SECTION SHOULD TEST BOTH WHAT THEY LEARN IN SCHOOL ABOUT THE SUBJECT AND THEIR ABILITY TO REASON MATHEMATICALLY.

Over half the students feel this way. Note that a smaller percentage, 15%, thinks the test measures mathematical reasoning ability than thinks it measures what they learn in school (26%).

On the other hand, among those who do not believe the test should measure equal amounts of reasoning ability and knowledge, opinion is divided as to what it should measure. About one in five opts for each of the other alternatives.

Differences among ethnic groups are not substantial on these issues.

"Which of these do you think best describes what the math part of the SAT test actually measures?"

"Which of these do you think the math part of the SAT should measure?"

Math part of SAT	Does Measure	Should Measure
Your knowledge of math learned in school	26%	22%
Your ability to reason mathematically	15	19
Same amount of both	54	57

("Other" and "no answer" omitted)

STUDENTS GENERALLY SAY THAT TEST CENTERS ARE CONVENIENT AND THAT THEY HAD LITTLE TROUBLE FINDING THE FACILITIES.

Students taking the SAT at other than their own high school were asked the three questions opposite.

Overall, results are favorable. Only 7% indicate the test center was inconvenient; however, among black students the figure is 23%. And some students, about one in five, had some trouble finding the facility or the particular room where the test was held.

The large majority of students indicate that the instructions they got were clear.

Hardly anyone says unclear. And the people in charge are mainly seen as friendly and courteous; if not, as at least businesslike and impersonal -- not mean and nasty.

"How clear were the instructions they gave you?"

	All Students
Very clear	76%
Fairly clear	20
Not too or not at all clear	2

("No answer" omitted)

"How were you treated there by the people in charge?"

Friendly and courteous	53%
Businesslike, impersonal	43
Mean and nasty	1

("No answer" omitted)

Experiences at Test Center

"How convenient for you was the test center you signed up for?"

	Students Taking Test Elsewhere than Own School	
Very convenient	52%	93%
Fairly convenient	41	
Not too or not at all convenient	7	

"How hard was it for you to find the test center?"

Easy to find	81%
A little difficult	17
Very difficult	2

"How about the particular room where the test was held?"

Easy to find	76%
A little difficult	20
Very difficult	3

("No answer" omitted)

Physical Conditions at Center

THERE ARE FEW COMPLAINTS ABOUT PHYSICAL WORKING CONDITIONS.

Physical working conditions tend to be rated good, not just average, and criticism of them is generally low.

Temperature is the only item which is rated poor by as many as one out of five students. There tends to be more criticism from black students on this factor than from students from other ethnic backgrounds, and women tend to be more critical about this than men.

"How do you rate the physical conditions at the test center?"

	Very Good or Good	Average	Poor or Very Poor
Lighting	84%	13	2
Space to work in	73%	18	8
Readily available restrooms	67%	21	11
Temperature	54%	24	21

("No answer" omitted)

Preparations for SAT

FAR AND AWAY THE MOST POPULAR METHOD OF TEST PREPARATION IS TO FILL OUT THE SAMPLE QUESTIONS IN THE "ABOUT THE SAT" BOOKLET.

Over 60% of all the students say they did this. Moreover, the figure for members of various ethnic minorities (black, Spanish-speaking, and Oriental students) is over 70%.

Other test preparation activities which receive a fair amount of mention are reviewing test preparation books, English or vocabulary books, and math books.

Overall, black and Oriental students indicate they prepare more for the SAT than white and Spanish-speaking students do -- that is, blacks and Orientals are more likely to mention the various preparatory exercises listed below.

"What sorts of things, if any, did you do to prepare to take these tests?"

	All Students
Filled out sample questions in "About the SAT" booklet	63%
Reviewed some test preparation books	27
Reviewed English and vocabulary books on my own	24
Reviewed math books on my own	20
Attended a review course or session at my school	11
Attended a coaching session outside school where I paid a fee	3
Reviewed materials from courses other than math or English	2
Other	8
I did nothing special to prepare	20
No answer	1

(Multiple responses)

Did Preparation Help

STUDENTS HAVE MIXED FEELINGS ABOUT THE UTILITY OF PREPARING FOR THE SAT.

About three in ten say that preparation did help, almost half that it probably didn't help but at least it made them feel less anxious, and one in five that it neither helped them prepare nor reduced anxiety.

"Do you think what you did to prepare for these tests actually helped you do better on the tests or didn't this really help you much?"

	Students Who Prepared for the Tests
Helped me do better	29%
Probably didn't help much but made me feel less anxious	46
Probably neither helped nor made me feel less anxious	20

("No answer" omitted)

Female and Spanish-speaking students are somewhat less likely than male students and members of other ethnic groups (blacks, Orientals, and whites) to feel that test preparation helps. However, those who have taken the SAT before are more apt to say that preparation helps than are those who are taking the test for the first time.

Few students start preparing for the SAT more than several weeks in advance and many wait until the last week.

"About how long before you took the tests did you start your preparations for taking them?"

	Students Who Prepared for the Tests
Week or less	41%
Two or three weeks before	25
Four or five weeks before	16
More than five weeks before	12

("No answer" omitted)

What Difference Do SAT Scores Make On An Individual's Ability To Do College Work

THE MAJORITY OF STUDENTS THINK THAT HOW WELL ONE DOES ON THE SAT HAS LITTLE TO DO WITH HOW WELL ONE WILL DO IN COLLEGE.

Blacks and whites are especially apt to feel this way.

About a third of the students, overall, believe that SAT scores make some difference, and among Orientals and the Spanish-speaking the number saying this is higher than that, but few students in any ethnic group think SAT scores make a lot of difference in college performance.

"How much difference do you think low SAT scores make in an individual's ability to do college work?"

	Not Much	Some	A Lot
All students	56%	36	8
Sex			
Male	52%	38	9
Female	58%	34	8
Ethnicity			
Black	53%	35	10
Spanish	41%	40	17
Oriental	39%	48	13
White	58%	35	7

("No answer" omitted)

Do Students Have An Idea of What Constitutes a Satisfying Score

MOST STUDENTS, 68%, HAVE SOME EXPECTATION REGARDING A SATISFACTORY SCORE TO ACHIEVE ON THE SAT.

Differences appear to be slight between males and females, and across ethnic groups.

However, among students who have taken the SAT before, 92% say "yes," whereas among those taking the SAT for the first time, the figure is only 56%.

"Do you have any idea what kind of a score on the combined verbal and mathematics section of the SAT would satisfy you -- would make you feel you had done okay on the SAT?"

	Yes	No
All students	68%	31
Sex		
Male	72%	27
Female	66%	34
Ethnicity		
Black	66%	34
Spanish	69%	30
Oriental	73%	27
White	69%	31
SAT Experience		
Took SAT before	92%	8
Did not take it before	56%	43

("No answer" omitted)

What SAT Scores Do Students Regard as Satisfactory

Many students feel that a score between 899 and 1,100 would be all right for their purposes.

However, a substantial number, 34%, would not be satisfied unless they scored 1,100 or more. One in five would be satisfied with a score below 900.

Among ethnic groups, Orientals and whites have the highest aspirations. About four in ten Orientals and 36% of the whites wouldn't be satisfied unless they scored 1,100 or more on the test. By contrast, the figure for this level of achievement for blacks is 11% and for Spanish-speaking students it is 17%.

Also, among students who have taken the SAT before, over 40% are aiming at a score of 1,100 or more, whereas among first-time test takers the figure is only 27%.

"What kind of combined or total verbal and math score do you have in mind as a satisfactory or okay score?"

	Students With An Idea of a Satisfactory Score	
Less than 800	8%	22%
800 - 899	14	
900 - 999	19	44%
1,000 - 1,099	25	
1,100 - 1,199	18	34%
1,200 - 1,299	10	
1,300 or more	6	

College Use of SAT

MANY STUDENTS THINK COLLEGES USE THE SAT FOR BOTH ADMISSION AND PLACEMENT PURPOSES.

Almost half the students, 46%, believe this. About one in four thinks the SAT is used just for admission purposes and one in five thinks it's a placement exam for English or math.

The TSWE is perceived differently. Almost half see it as placement exam for English and only a small minority, 11%, think it is mainly for admission purposes. However, about a quarter think colleges use it for both purposes.

"What are your impressions of how colleges are supposed to use the SAT scores?"

"What are your impressions of how colleges are supposed to use the Test of Standard Written English scores?"

	All Students	
	SAT Scores	TSWE Scores
To help make admission decisions	26%	11%
To help place students in appropriate math or English course	19	46
Both	46	26
Other	7	7
Don't know	2	9

("No answer" omitted)

Financial Aid

BY AND LARGE, STUDENTS COULD USE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT FINANCIAL AID.

Eighty-one percent could use some or a lot more information. The desire for more information is at about the same level among the different ethnic groups and does not vary much by sex.

"How much do you feel you know about the various kinds of financial aid that are available to help you pay for a college education?

	All Students	
As much as I need	18%	
Could use some more information	40	81%
Could use a lot more information	41	

("No answer" omitted)

As might be expected, students from low-income families are considerably more likely to regard financial aid as an important consideration in selecting a school than are those from upper-income homes.

"In selecting a particular college to attend, how important a consideration to you is your ability to get financial aid (other than what your parents contribute)?"

	Very	Somewhat	Not Too or Not At All
All students	30%	31	38
Family Income			
Less than $10,000 per year	64%	29	7
$10,000 but less than $15,000	49%	36	13
$15,000 but less than $20,000	35%	36	29
$20,000 or more	10%	27	63

("No answer" omitted)

Factors Affecting Choice of College

STUDENTS SAY THAT THE CALIBER OF THE CURRICULA IN THEIR FIELD OF INTEREST IS THE MOST IMPORTANT CRITERION AFFECTING THEIR CHOICE OF A COLLEGE.

Over 90% rate this factor as very important. Next in importance are the general academic reputation of the college, reasonable cost, and chances of getting admitted.

Some differences among groups on some of these factors should be noted:

- As should be expected, reasonable cost is generally considered very important by students from low rather than from high-income families.
- Students in the top fifth of their class consider a school's academic reputation to be very important more often than do those in lower segments.
- Social reputation of a school is most frequently considered very important by black students; it is least often thought very important by Orientals.
- Blacks place considerably more emphasis on their chances of getting in (find it very important) than do members of other ethnic groups.

Final point: Females are no more likely than males to rate coeducation as "very important." Among both groups the figure is around 30%.

Factors Affecting Choice of College

"Below are some factors that might affect your choice of a college to attend. How important are each of these in your thinking?"

	Total*	Very Important	Fairly Important
Has good courses in your field of interest	100%	93%	7
College has good academic reputation	95%	67%	28
You have a good chance to get in	90%	48%	42
Cost is reasonable	89%	55%	34
Good social reputation	85%	45%	40
School is coeducational	67%	32%	35
Your teachers or counselors recommend it	63%	11%	52
It's easy to get there	59%	25%	34
Parents suggest you attend	42%	5%	37
Has good reputation for athletics	39%	11%	28
You know some kids who attend	36%	8%	28
Friends of yours are thinking of going	24%	3%	21

("Not too important," "not at all important," and "no answer" omitted)

*The "total" column is the sum of those who said "very important" and those who said "fairly important."

What Should be Done with the SAT

RIGHT AFTER TAKING IT, STUDENTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO FAVOR KEEPING THE TEST THAN DOING AWAY WITH IT.

Thirty-seven percent say it's a poor idea to eliminate the SAT; 20% favor getting rid of it.

However, a large number, 40%, can't make up their minds. Members of ethnic minorities, especially the Spanish-speaking (58%), are apt to say "hard to decide."

If one compares the results below with those in the previous chapter, where students answered the question before taking the SAT, one will note that the percent saying "hard to decide" has risen and the percent saying "poor idea" has declined. This may indicate that some students feel a little disappointed with their performance on the SAT.

"Suppose there were no SAT or similar tests that were part of the college admissions process -- no tests like these for you to take as one of the things you do to get admitted to college. Do you think this would be a good idea or a poor idea?"

	Poor Idea	Hard to Decide	Good Idea
All students	37%	40	20
Sex			
Male	41%	36	19
Female	33%	43	21
Ethnicity			
Black	24%	46	23
Spanish	30%	58	8
Oriental	37%	46	16
White	40%	38	20

("No answer" omitted)

III

VIEWS OF STUDENTS AFTER THEY GET THEIR SCORES

This section discusses questions in the questionnaire students completed after receiving their SAT and TSWE scores, with the exception of the "Your Student Report" booklet questions which are reviewed in Section IV.

Discussed in this section are:

- How satisfied students are with their SAT results and the effect SAT scores have on their college plans.
- Any problems students are experiencing applying for colleges.
- How students feel now about the SAT and whether it's a good idea to do away with it.
- Views on the fee.
- Contact with the ATP.

SAT Results: Reality Versus Expectations

MOST STUDENTS DID ABOUT AS WELL AS OR BETTER THAN THEY EXPECTED TO ON THE SAT AND TSWE.

"How did your actual scores compare with what you expected to score?"

	I Did Better	About as Expected	I Did Worse
SAT math	24%	42	32
SAT verbal	16%	50	33
TSWE	14%	52	26

("No answer" omitted)

Note, however, that rather substantial minorities say they did worse than expected -- especially on the two tests comprising the SAT. The number saying they did worse on each test does not vary much by sex.

With respect to ethnicity, Orientals are more likely than members of other ethnic groups to state that they did worse on the language exams -- the TSWE and the verbal section of the SAT. On the SAT verbal, 45% of the Orientals say "worse" and on the TSWE, 37% gave this response.

And on balance, looking at all three tests, Orientals are most likely to be dissatisfied with their scores.

Any Changes in Plans as a Result of SAT Scores

MOST STUDENTS SAY THAT SAT SCORES HAVE NOT HAD ANY INFLUENCE ON THEIR COLLEGE PLANS.

Three-quarters report no changes. A small number, 3%, say they have set their sights higher, and a somewhat larger number, 13%, say lower.

Among ethnic groups, Orientals are most likely to have had their plans affected by SAT scores -- 24% say they have set their goals lower; black students are next with 18% saying lower.

As might be expected, those who scored low on the SAT (less than 800) are more likely than those who scored high (1,000 or more) to have set their sights lower.

"Have your test scores caused you to change your mind about the kinds of schools you are considering applying to?"

		SAT Scores		
	All Students	Less Than 800	800 to 999	1,000 or More
Yes, set sights higher	3%	4%	2%	4%
Yes, set sights lower	13	20	14	3
No change	76	72	75	81
Not applicable (already admitted)	8	3	9	12

("No answer" omitted)

Selecting a College

ABOUT A THIRD OF THE STUDENTS ARE EXPECTING PROBLEMS IN SELECTING A COLLEGE.

The number is lower among Spanish-speaking students than among students from other ethnic backgrounds -- highest among blacks.

"Are you having any problems or difficulties in deciding what specific colleges to consider?"

	Yes	No
All students	32%	68
Ethnicity		
Black	37%	62
Spanish	19%	81
Oriental	30%	70
White	32%	68

("No answer" omitted)

Here are some examples of the kinds of problems students are experiencing (they probably ring some familiar bells to all who have ever gone to college):

I am attempting to get a scholarship in tennis, and I want to go to a small liberal arts college. It is difficult to combine these circumstances, since many small colleges don't offer athletic scholarships.

I don't have any idea which colleges would have the best department in the area I'm interested in. Also, I have a financial problem and money must also be considered.

It is hard to find the college that your parents can afford.

I cannot decide on the size of college that I want to attend. I have gone to a small private school all my life and I am wondering if I would feel lost at a large university.

Because of my SAT score, I have to lower my range of colleges to apply to, even though I can do the work in a major school.

I'm trying to decide whether to go away or to stay here to attend college. Also, I'm not sure yet what I want to major in.

What Should Be Done with the SAT

NOT SURPRISINGLY, ULTIMATE ATTITUDES TOWARD THE SAT ARE RELATED TO PERFORMANCE ON THE TEST.

This question was asked on all three questionnaires and, on balance, those who want to keep it outnumber whose who want to get rid of it by a margin of about two to one (approximately 40% to 20%).

The number of students who feel that it is a good idea or a poor idea to get rid of the SAT does not vary a great deal from questionnaire to questionnaire. Note, however, that test scores -- which were only available to students filling out the third questionnaire -- make a considerable difference. Those who report a high score on the SAT are much more likely than those reporting a low score to be opposed to the elimination of the SAT.

"Suppose there were no SAT or similar tests that were part of the college admissions process -- no tests like these for you to take as one of the things you do to get admitted to college. Do you think it would be a good idea or a poor idea to do away with tests like the SAT altogether?"

	Poor Idea	Hard to Decide	Good Idea
Pre-SAT	44%	34	20
Post-SAT	37%	40	20
Post-SAT scores	46%	31	22
Low scoring (less than 800)	38%	31	28
Medium scoring (800-999)	42%	33	25
High scoring (1,000 or more)	64%	28	8

("No answer" omitted)

Reasons for Supporting or Objecting to the SAT

Students who favor keeping the SAT cite the belief that it's a good way to evaluate a student because it's objective and impartial, and some say it should be kept because it tells them where they stand and can be useful for self-improvement.

Those who think it would be a good idea to eliminate the SAT mention that some good students do poorly because they get nervous, that the SAT is limited in what it measures, and that it should not be the only consideration in being admitted to college (which is not exactly an argument to do away with the SAT entirely).

Students selecting the hard to decide category cite a number of reasons for their choice:

- some give qualified approval;
- others express concern that the SAT is not a complete measure of ability;
- some are just not sure the SAT is needed;
- and some others talk about some students doing poorly because they are nervous or anxious.

Note: Students taking the first and third questionnaires were asked a followup question: why do you think it's a good idea or a poor idea to do away with the SAT, or why can't you decide? Answers were coded and are shown opposite.

Bear in mind that the base for the percentages opposite varies depending on whether a student said good idea, poor idea, or hard to decide. See previous page for base percentages.

Reasons for Supporting or Objecting to SAT

	Students answering . . . Third Questionnaire	First Questionnaire
KEEP THE SAT		
Good or objective way to evaluate a student: good measure; it's a way of allowing the colleges to see how much the students know; colleges can determine the students' abilities better than teachers or grades in evaluating you.	66%	75%
Tells you where you stand: shows you where to concentrate on improving; you wouldn't know what area you really excel in.	26	14
DO AWAY WITH SAT		
Do poorly because SAT makes you nervous: the day you take it may be one of your bad days; SATs are intimidating; makes you tense.	30%	17%
SAT is too limited: not a fair measure of ability; should not be limited to math and English; does not test everything you know.	28	26
SAT should not be only consideration: should put emphasis on school records, not test scores; colleges should go by motivation.	27	25
Some good students do poorly on SAT: some people who do not achieve on tests are very good students.	11	19
HARD TO DECIDE		
Qualified approval: colleges shouldn't place too much weight on tests, but tests are needed -- student may improve.	31%	20%
Not sure SAT is necessary: not sure generally that they are needed.	15	9
Not complete measure of ability: doesn't test everything; does not measure creativity.	13	15
Some kids get nervous and do poorly: makes you nervous -- might not do as well as you could.	10	9

(Multiple responses; Top mentions in each category)

Fee for SAT

ONLY A MINORITY OF STUDENTS COMPLAIN ABOUT THE FEE STRUCTURE.

About 80% say the fee is reasonable; only one in five thinks it's too high.

There is little difference of opinion by ethnic background or family income.

"The fee for the SAT and Test of Standard Written English is $7.25, and this fee includes the information you receive about the tests, scoring results, and providing reports for you, your high school, and colleges you designate: one for you, one for your high school, and three for colleges or scholarship sponsors."

"How do you feel about this fee?"

	Way Too High	Fair and Reasonable	Too Low
All students	19%	78	1
Ethnicity			
Black	18%	82	0
Spanish	15%	85	0
Oriental	19%	78	0
White	19%	77	2
Family Income			
Less than $10,000 per year	12%	82	3
$10,000 but less than $15,000	20%	77	0
$15,000 but less than $20,000	19%	79	0
$20,000 or more	14%	81	3

("No answer" omitted)

Contacts with the ATP

FEW STUDENTS HAVE HAD ANY PERSONAL CONTACTS WITH THE ADMISSIONS TESTING PROGRAM.

And very few of those who have had contacts have been treated discourteously or have not had their problem resolved.

"Have you ever written or phoned The College Board to get an answer to some question or because you had some problem related to the SAT?"

	All Students
No	97%
Yes	3

"How were you treated by the people you contacted?"

	Students with Contacts
Base:	(3%)
They were:	
Courteous	51%
Businesslike	24
Discourteous	10

("No answer" omitted)

"Was your question or problem resolved satisfactorily?"

	Students with Contacts
Base:	(3%)
Yes	85%
No	14

("No answer" omitted)

Summary of Feelings About the SAT

IN SUMMING UP THEIR FEELINGS, STUDENTS ARE MORE APT TO DESCRIBE NEGATIVE THAN POSITIVE IMPRESSIONS.

Taking important tests like the SAT and TSWE is probably no fun. Recall from Section I of this report that most students felt at least somewhat nervous and anxious about these tests before taking them.

It's not surprising, therefore, that in summing up their impressions, the negative comments outnumber the positive.

"You have gone through the whole experience of taking the SAT and TSWE tests. How do you sum up your feelings about this experience?"

	All Students
Negative Answers (net count)	66%
Too much pressure: makes you nervous; hectic and frustrating; I was worried.	18%
Test not necessary: useless; don't need it for college; they should look at grades, not test scores.	16
Test should be shorter: too long; it was boring; you need more time; tiresome, long drawn out.	13
Complaints about administration or facilities: proctors were very impersonal, almost mechanical; not enough space	8
Test should be easier: it was hard in general; there were things on the test I have never seen before	8
Positive Answers (net count)	36%
Test was fair or worthwhile: it's a good experience, it's fair; prepares you for college.	14%
Wasn't as bad as I expected: I wasn't as nervous as I thought I'd be; it went smoothly; easier second time around; no different than any other test.	11
Personal satisfaction from taking it: I was pleased with my results; showed me where I stand; I did okay.	11

(Multiple responses, Top mentions)

IV

STUDENT VIEWS OF THE SAT COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM

Reviewed are readership and understanding of:

- The "Student Bulletin."
- "About the SAT and TSWE."
- "Your Student Report" and the "Score Report."

Also some questions probing whether it's all right to collect various information in the SDQ.

Readership of SAT Booklets

THE "STUDENT BULLETIN" IS THE BEST-READ SAT PUBLICATION; "YOUR STUDENT REPORT," THE WORST.

Over half the students say they read all or most of the "Student Bulletin" and only one in five just skims through or reads none of it.

Readership levels fall off on the booklet "About the SAT and TSWE." And there is an even sharper decline on "Your Student Report"; on this booklet, a larger number just skims through or reads none of it than reads it thoroughly. (One might speculate that a reason for this decline is that "Your Student Report," which is basically explanatory, has to compete with the more meaningful and relevant "Score Report," which reports actual results. Another reason may be that students mainly use "Your Student Report" as back-up -- that is, they merely refer to it when they come across something in the "Score Report" that they don't understand.)

	How much did you read of . . .		
	Student Bulletin*	About the SAT and TSWE*	Your Student Report
All of it	21%	21%	11%
Most of it	31	27	21
	52%	48%	32%
Parts of it	26	17	30
Skimmed through	16	21	18
None of it	5	13	19
	21%	34%	37%
Don't remember/ no answer	1	1	1

Overall, readership levels on these various booklets tend to be highest among blacks and Orientals, lowest among whites, with readership among the Spanish-speaking somewhere in-between.

*Asked of the students who remember getting this publication.

Understanding of SAT Booklets

Few students complain that SAT booklets are hard to understand.

Most say the booklets are fairly easy to understand and some say very easy.

How easy to read and understand would you say these were . . .

	Student Bulletin*		About the SAT and TSWE*		Your Student Report**	
Very easy	24%	91%	28%	90%	28%	84%
Fairly easy	67		62		56	
Somewhat difficult	8	8%	9	10%	15	16%
Very difficult	*		1		1	

("No answer" omitted)

Differences between ethnic groups on how easy these booklets are to understand are not sharp.

Students were also asked to evaluate "Your Student Report" on how useful it was in helping them interpret and understand the "Score Report" and, as can be seen, results are favorable.

Usefulness of "Your Student Report" . . .

	Students Who Read Any of Your Student Report**	
Very useful	29%	79%
Fairly useful	50	
Not too useful	19	21%
Not useful at all	2	

*Asked of the students who either reported reading at least some of the publication or said they didn't remember whether or not they read it.

**Asked of the students who reported either reading or skimming this publication.

Understanding of Subjects Covered in the "Student Bulletin"

Student understanding of the "Student Bulletin" varies by subject area.

Best understood subjects are what you do at the test center and how to correct information you provide before taking the SAT. Least understood are what the Cumulative Scoring Report means and what the College Scholarship Service is.

The section dealing with what to do if you don't want test results scored made the least impression on students -- 21% don't remember it. It may have the least saliency or relevance.

Results on these subjects do not vary much by ethnic group. A notable exception is that 44% of the Orientals say they don't understand what the College Scholarship Service is.

"How well do you think you understand each of these subjects now?"

	Understand			Don't Remember Reading
	Very Well	Fairly Well	Not Well	
What you do at test center when taking the SAT	61%	28	8	2
How to correct information you provided before taking the SAT	51%	28	13	7
Purpose, use of the SDQ	43%	38	15	3
What Student Search Service does	39%	31	21	8
Difference between achievement tests and the SAT	38%	32	23	6
What will be in your SAT report	33%	38	21	7
How colleges use the SAT in admission process	28%	45	22	4
What to do if you don't want test results scored -- so that they won't be reported	28%	22	28	21
What the SAT measures	26%	55	13	4
What the TSWE is	22%	44	25	8
What the Cumulative Scoring Report means	20%	36	31	12
What the College Scholarship Service is	22%	31	33	13

("No answer" omitted)

Value of "About the SAT and TSWE"

Most students feel this booklet does give them a better understanding of what the SAT is all about.

Males more than females, and blacks more than members of other minority groups are liable to feel this way -- Orientals, least so.

"Do you think you have a better idea now as to what the SAT is all about than you did before you got this booklet, about the same or less of an understanding?"**

	Better Idea	About the Same	Less Understanding
All Readers of "About the SAT and TSWE"	63%	36	1
Sex			
Male	68%	31	1
Female	59%	40	1
Ethnicity			
Black	70%	28	2
Spanish	61%	37	2
Oriental	51%	49	0
White	63%	37	*

Most students, almost 90%, remember getting this booklet.

*Less than .5%

**Asked of the students who either reported reading at least some of the publication or said they didn't remember whether or not they read it.

Role of Practice Questions

Most students say they did all or most the practice questions. (See top table opposite.)

Blacks (69%) and Orientals (65%) are more likely to have completed all or most of these practice questions than white (58%) or Spanish-speaking (only 45%) students.

There is no strong desire for a great increase in the number of practice questions in the "About the SAT and TSWE" booklet.

True, about half would like some more questions, but less than 10% feel there are nowhere near enough (middle table opposite). Among ethnic groups, Orientals are most apt to want a lot more questions.

Yet, filling out practice questions does not necessarily increase confidence in ability to cope with the SAT or TSWE.

Thirty-five percent say these practice questions increased their confidence, but a quarter say decreased, and the largest number, 40%, says it made no difference.

Females are more likely than males to experience a decrease in confidence as a result of doing the practice questions.

Role of Practice Questions

"This booklet contains a set of practice questions on vocabulary, reading comprehension, and mathematics. How many of these practice questions did you try to answer?"

	Students Who Got the Booklet*	
All	35%	60%
Most	25	
Half	13	
Few	19	27%
None	8	

"In terms of giving you a general understanding of what to expect on the SAT, how do you feel about the number of practice questions there were?"

	Students Who Got the Booklet**	
Too many	2%	
Right number	41	
Would have liked more	48	57%
Nowhere near enough	9	

"Did completing these practice questions increase your confidence that you will be able to do well on the test, decrease your confidence, or make no difference at all in how you feel about taking the test?"

	Students Who Got the Booklet**
Increased it	35%
No difference	40
Decreased it	25

*Asked of the students who either reported reading at least some of the publication or said they didn't remember whether or not they read it.

**Asked of the students who both reported reading at least some of the publication and completed at least half the practice questions.

Honesty of College Board Materials

THE COLLEGE BOARD GETS CONSIDERABLE CREDIT FOR PROVIDING HONEST INFORMATION.

This is especially true for such information as what the SAT measures, whether you should guess, and the purpose and use of the SDQ.

Widest reservations are expressed on information concerning how colleges use the SAT in the admission process -- 28% of all students think something is held back, and among Orientals and Spanish-speaking the figure is nearly 40% on this item.

"On each of the subjects below, do you think the explanation you have received from the various College Board materials was completely honest, or do you think The College Board held something back?"

	Information Was Honest	Something Held Back	Don't Know
What the SAT measures	70%	13	16
Whether you should guess or not	67%	14	18
The purpose and use of the SDQ	67%	18	13
The purpose and use of the TSWE	63%	11	25
How much good it does to prepare for SAT	60%	20	19
How colleges use SAT results	55%	28	16

("No answer" omitted)

The Student Descriptive Questionnaire

THE LARGE MAJORITY OF STUDENTS SAY THEY REMEMBER COMPLETING THE SDQ.

The completion rate is highest among Orientals, 91%, and lowest among Spanish-speaking students, 71%.

Students have a variety of reasons for doing so -- most prominent is the notion that it would help colleges evaluate them, next that it might help them get into a college of their choice. And some students, about one in five, thought they had to complete it -- it was required.

"The Student Bulleting contained the Student Descriptive Questionnaire (SDQ). This questionnaire asks for information about your interests, accomplishments, plans, and some background about your parents and family income. Did you complete the Student Descriptive Questionnaire?"

	Yes	No	Don't Remember
All students	86%	8	6
Ethnicity			
Black	86%	6	8
Spanish	71%	7	22
Oriental	91%	2	7
White	86%	9	5

"Could you explain your reasons for either filling the SDQ out or not doing so?"

	All Students Who Completed the SDQ
To help the colleges: tell colleges about my interests, etc.	29%
Thought is would help me: would show my interests, accomplishes, etc.	24
Thought it was required: thought they needed the information; mandatory.	19
No reason not to: couldn't hurt me; nothing to hide.	14
Don't know	16
Nonspecific	4
Other	1

(Multiple Responses)

Is It All Right for Colleges To Get SDQ Information

Many students object to colleges getting information about their ethnicity or their participation in church and community affairs.

Over half say colleges should not know their ethnic background. This varies by ethnicity of the student -- 60% of the whites object compared to only 41% of the Spanish-speaking, 40% of the Orientals, and 30% of the blacks.

Forty-four percent believe it's wrong for colleges to get information about church and community activities. There is little variation by the demographic breakdowns we have available (religion or lack of it may have some influence on these results, but we did not ask students about religion).

Some students object to information about sex, but this objection occurs about as frequently among males as females.

Also, some object to information on whether you work and how you think you compare to others on various abilities. Spanish-speaking students are most likely to be opposed to colleges receiving the latter information.

Is It All Right for Colleges to Get SDQ Information

"Some of the information on the SDQ goes to colleges you select along with your SAT scores. Please rate the following information, which you yourself provide on the SDQ, on whether you think it's all right for colleges to get this or whether they should not get it."

	Yes, All Right	They Shouldn't Get This
Your course of study	97%	2
Number of years you study English, social and physical sciences	96%	3
Your grades in these subjects	95%	4
Kind of school you go to -- public or private	90%	9
Any scholastic honors you receive	88%	11
Your scholastic rank	87%	12
Your extra-curricular activities	81%	18
Your athletic activities	78%	20
Your citizenship	73%	26
How you think you compare with others in various abilities (acting, math, music, etc.)	70%	29
Your sex	68%	31
Whether you work or not during high school years	67%	32
Participation in church, community activities	55%	44
Your ethnicity	44%	55

("No answer" omitted)

Should College Board Collect Information for Research Purposes

There are widespread objections to the college board collecting information about parents' educational achievement -- although students are assured it is for research only.

Over 60% are opposed to providing this kind of information. Objections are highest (71%) among students who best-educated parent only has a high school education or less, lowest (53%) among students who have a parent with a college degree.

A substantial number, almost half, don't think it's right for The College Board to collect estimates of family income. Objections here come more from students in high income than those in low income families. For example, 50% of the students from families earning $20,000 or more a year object, compared to 32% from families with an annual income of less than $10,000.

Males (42%) are more likely than females (30%) to oppose providing information on dependents.

"The information below, which you are asked to furnish on the SDQ, is used only for research by The College Board and does not go to colleges. Please rate each item on whether you think it's all right for The College Board to collect this information or whether they should not collect it."

	All Right to Collect This	Should Not Collect This
The number of financial dependents your parents or guardians have	64%	35
Your estimate of your parents' income	51%	48
Your parents' educational achievements	37%	62

("No answer" omitted)

Understanding of Score Report

ON BALANCE, MOST STUDENT DO NOT HAVE GREAT DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING THE "SCORE REPORT" -- THOUGH THERE IS A FAIRLY HIGH LEVEL OF COMPLAINT FROM BLACK, SPANISH-SPEAKING AND ORIENTAL STUDENTS.

The "Score Report" contains various kinds of information. On most items, large majorities, over two-thirds, say they understand the particular item or score fairly well.

The two key scores -- the math and verbal SAT scores -- receive the best ratings.

However, one-third say they have difficulty understanding the TSWE score (which is a new test) and the same number complain about the item indicating percentile rank among enrolled freshmen in specific colleges. Also, over a quarter have difficulties with the other two percentile scores -- scores for the national high school sample and college-bound seniors.

Among ethnic groups, black, Spanish-speaking, and Oriental students tend to have more difficulty understanding the various elements of the "Score Report" than do white students.

"How well do you think you understand each of these scores that appear in the Score Report you received?"

	Very or Fairly Well	Not Too or Not at All Well	Report Didn't Contain This
Your SAT math score	81%	18	*
Your SAT verbal score	79%	20	*
Your percentile rank in national high school sample	70%	26	2
Your percentile rank among college-bound seniors	68%	29	1
Your TSWE score	61%	33	2
Your percentile rank among freshmen in specific colleges	51%	33	13

("No answer" omitted)

*Less than .5%

Criticisms of Your Score Report

About a third of the students say there are still things about their "Score Report" they don't understand even after reading "Your Student Report."

Black students are more likely than members of other ethnic groups to complain about this.

"Were there any items on your Score Report that you did not fully understand after reading 'Your Student Report' booklet?"*

	Yes	No
All students	34%	65
Ethnicity		
Black	50%	50
Spanish	41%	57
Oriental	22%	76
White	31%	68

("No answer" omitted)

Following are some comments indicating items or areas students have in mind:

The percentile ranks of scores on the TSWE.

The section under "SCORES" was fairly unclear in some parts. For example, the diagram and explanation of "30 point variation on the college board 200-800."

Permission granted to forward information through the Student Search Service.

I didn't understand how I was to find my total score, whether I was to add up all the scores and subscores, or add up just the verbal and math scores.

Percentile ranks for enrolled freshmen in these colleges. Current scores and percentiles.

*Asked of the students who reported either reading or skimming this publication.

Should Colleges Be Sent Additional Information

MOST STUDENTS DO NOT THINK THE SCORE REPORT SENT TO VARIOUS COLLEGES NEEDS TO INCLUDE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THEM.

The large majority, almost 80%, indicate that colleges get enough information in the report.

"If you have your own Score Report handy, please get it and review it briefly. You will note that in addition to your scores on the SAT and Test of Standard Written English, this report contains information you gave on the Student Descriptive Questionnaire when you registered for the tests.

"A copy of your Score Report is sent to any three colleges that you designate. Is there any other information you feel should be included on the report to help college know more about you?"

	Yes	No
All Students	20%	79

("No Answer" Omitted)

Below and on the following page are some comments which illustrate the range of information students want. Not that some of this information is already supplied in other parts of the college admission process.

The colleges should be informed of the student's interest in a major field such as music, the arts or an academic program like engineering.

Information concerning past jobs and/or courses taken outside of school which may provide experience for courses which one may plan to take in college.

The student description and your report card, attendance in school.

My financial situation.

How much this test has to do with each college.

The information about how you rank in the major categories, organizations, interests, etc.

Whether or not I would be able to get a scholarship.

Give scores from PSAT if taken, for comparison.

High school information.

Colleges should know if you're a good testing student or one who consistently does worse on tests than on general school work.

That your first choice should be indicated.

That my scores were worse then expected and that my grades are better.

In addition to the grades you estimated, they should (the reports) have the grades you actually received.

More information to give them better background on you as a person, and your goals, not necessarily on how you may have scored.

I feel that they should be more personal; each student is different in a very special way.

Tell them what classes you have taken to take the SAT.

Other scores or test scores that the student has taken.

Hobbies.

A short essay about yourself.

Your financial status.

Instead of putting your latest grade on the self-reported grades, you should be able to put your best grades. It looks better to the colleges.

A personal statement from the applicant expressing his interests and intentions and reasons for going to college.

I feel that it should contain some information about what I plan to major in so that they (the colleges) can send advice and information pertaining to their courses in these fields.

You high school grades.

If you have initiative. If you can do work without being pushed. If you've even been away from your parents. How much time do you spend on homework, and how much time do you plan to spend.

How I act in school. What I like to do in school, and also remarks from some of my teachers about their classes.

The comparative scores among your own High School students should be given, to show how good you did compared to others in your school.

A detailed report of efficiency written by school officials.

APPENDIX

Sampling & Weighting

Guide to Statistical Significance of Survey Results

Questionnaires

- Pre SAT
- Post SAT
- Post SAT Score

THE SAMPLING AND WEIGHTING

Sample Selection and Size

Ethnic groups are not equally distributed in the population of the United States, nor are ethnic groups equally represented among those who take the SAT. Whites, for example, outnumber blacks in the population by a large margin -- approximately ten to one -- and by a similar margin among those taking the SAT. In order to ensure a sufficient number of respondents for reliable analysis per ethnic group and also by region of the country, it was necessary to set quotas and to sample disproportionate to size of population.

Thus, the total sample for the first wave of interviews was approximately as follows:

SAT Takers	Approximate Number Selected
Blacks	400
Spanish-speaking	400
Orientals	400
Others in Southwest (White, non-Spanish speaking)	400
White, non-Spanish speaking students outside Southwest	1,500

The sample of approximately 3,000 was then divided, using a random method, into three segments of approximately 1,000 each. Each of these segments was then assigned to one of the three questionnaires.

Completion Rates

The completion rate goal was 60% and it was met in all three waves of interviews.

	Initial Sample	Completed Questionnaires	Completion Rate
Pre-SAT questionnaire	1,074	748	70%
Post-SAT questionnaire	976	692	71%
Post-SAT score questionnaire	958	584	61%
Overall	3,008	2,024	67%

Profile of Sample for Key Groups

	Number of Respondents		
	Pre-SAT Questionnaire	Post-SAT Questionnaire	Post-SAT Score Questionnaire
All Students	748	692	584
Sex			
Male	337	332	264
Female	402	356	320
Class Rank			
Top fifth	300	270	241
Second fifth	140	126	109
Middle fifth	102	89	82
Below middle fifth	17	10	11
Ethnic			
Black	111	95	79
Spanish-speaking background	108	95	86
Oriental	115	108	84
White	394	377	332
Family Income			
Less than $10,000 per year	141	112	85
$10,000 but less than $15,000	100	108	74
$15,000 but less than $20,000	116	98	77
$20,000 or more	218	208	208
SAT Experience			
Took SAT before	220	198	177
Did not take it before	518	487	405

Weighting

As indicated earlier, various ethnic groups and test-takers from the Southwest were sampled disproportionate to their representation in the total population of test-takers. To compensate for these differences in probabilities of selection assigned to these various subsegments and to adjust for differences in completion experience, weights were used in data processing. These weighting procedures ensure that overall results reflect the total population from which the sample is drawn. Thus, weighting restores proportionality.

GUIDE TO STATISTICAL SIGNIFICANCE TO SURVEY RESULTS

Sampling Tolerances

Results of all surveys based on a sample of a population are subject to sampling tolerances. The probable limits of such tolerances can be estimated by standard statistical methods. The sampling tolerances vary with the size of the sample, the universe, and the size of the percentage results.

The table below shows tolerances applicable to key subgroups presented in this report.

	Approximate Sampling Tolerances Applicable to Percentages At or Near These Levels				
	10% or 90%	20% or 80%	30% or 70%	40% or 60%	50%
700	3%	4%	4%	5%	5%
600	3%	4%	5%	5%	5%
500	3%	5%	5%	6%	6%
400	4%	5%	6%	6%	6%
300	4%	6%	7%	7%	7%
200	5%	7%	8%	9%	9%
100	7%	10%	11%	12%	12%

(95 in 100 confidence level)

For example, on a question where 20% of all 700 or so students respond with a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that this result would not vary more than four percentage points (second column, first line in above table), plus or minus, from a complete coverage of the universe using the same survey procedures.

Tolerances are also involved in a comparison of results from two subgroups covered by this study, such as males and females. A difference, in other words, must be of at least a certain size to be considered statistically significant. The table below is a guide to the sampling tolerances applicable to such comparisons between samples.

	Differences Required for Significance At or Near These Percentage Levels				
	10% or 90%	20% or 80%	30% or 70%	40% or 60%	50%
600 and 600	4%	6%	7%	7%	7%
400	5%	6%	7%	8%	8%
300	5%	7%	8%	9%	9%
200	6%	8%	9%	10%	10%
100	8%	11%	12%	13%	13%
400 and 400	5%	7%	8%	9%	9%
300	6%	8%	9%	9%	10%
200	7%	9%	10%	11%	11%
100	8%	11%	13%	14%	14%
300 and 300	6%	8%	9%	10%	10%
200	7%	9%	10%	11%	11%
100	9%	11%	13%	14%	14%
200 and 200	7%	10%	11%	12%	12%
100	9%	12%	14%	15%	15%
100 and 100	11%	14%	16%	17%	17%

(95 in 100 confidence level)

FOLLOWING IS THE QUESTIONNAIRE USED TO SOLICIT

VIEWS OF STUDENTS BEFORE TAKING THE SAT

Response Analysis

Research Park, Route 206
Princeton, New Jersey 08540
(609) 921-3333

November, 1977

Dear High School Student:

As you know from the letter Dr. Marland, President of The College Board, sent you recently, you have been selected to participate in a survey conducted by Response Analysis for The College Board -- the sponsors of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) which you will take shortly.

The purpose of this survey is to gather information which will help The College Board better serve the needs of students like yourself. Please fill this questionnaire out now, before you take the SAT.

The questionnaire covers subjects like your goals and ambitions, how you feel about taking the tests, how you think the tests should be used, and reactions to College Board publications and registration procedures.

Please complete the questionnaire now and then do two things:

1. Mail the questionnaire back in the self-addressed envelope to Response Analysis.

2. Put your name on the postcard and mail that back too. We will check your name off our list and not send you any reminders. Your anonymity is guaranteed because your postcard and questionnaire come in separately and cannot be linked.

I want to emphasize that no one will even know how you as an individual responded. You do not identify yourself on the questionnaire. The analysis or review will consist of examining statistical patterns and results for the students who participate.

The survey is completely separate from the tests. That's why you mail it back to us at Response Analysis rather than to The College Board.

It is important that everyone in the sample participate. That's the only way we can be sure we get reliable results. If you have any questions, please call me collect to (609) 921-3333 any time between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

Sincerely,

Alfred Vogel

Alfred Vogel
Vice President

A few instructions before you begin:

Most questions are multiple choice, with a number in front of each of the possible answers. To show what you think, just draw a circle around the answer that comes closest to your opinion.

For example:

My favorite season of the year is . . .

1 Spring
2 Summer
(3) Fall
4 Winter

A few questions have blank spaces instead of answer numbers. Just complete these in your own words.

The numbers on the right side of each page are what we call column guides. They make it easier for the people who prepare these questionnaires for tabulating to do their work.

First, some questions about the kinds of colleges you are thinking of attending.

1. At this time, how sure are you that you will attend college? *Circle one number.*

1 I probably will not attend college
2 About fifty-fifty -- maybe I will, maybe I won't
3 I will probably go to college if I am admitted to one I want to go to

107

2. If you could go anywhere you wanted, what kind of college or university do you think you would enter or attend initially? *Circle one number.*

1 A two-year community college
2 A small private liberal arts college or university
3 A small public or state-supported college or university
4 A large private college or university
5 A large public or state-supported college or university
6 Other (please specify) _____

_____

7 I have no idea

108

3. What kind of college or university do you think you will actually enter or attend initially? *Circle one number.*

1 A two-year community college
2 A small private liberal arts college or university
3 A small public or state-supported college or university
4 A large private college or university
5 A large public or state-supported college or university
6 Other (please specify) _____

_____

7 I'm not sure yet

109

4. Have you been admitted to a college? *Circle one number.*

1 Yes, and I intend to enter that school -- GO TO QUESTION 6
2 Yes, but I may decide to go elsewhere } ANSWER QUESTION 5
3 No, I have not been admitted anywhere }

110

5. Which statement below comes closest to summing up where you stand now in your selection of a college? *Circle <u>one</u> number.*

1 I have one particular college or university in mind
2 I have narrowed my choices down to two or three colleges or universities
3 There are a number of colleges or universities, four or more, that I am seriously considering
4 I haven't begun to think much about specific colleges or universities

111

Now a couple of questions about what you may study in college when you get there.

6. Regardless of how sure you are at this time, which of the following subject areas do you think you will major in or consider majoring in? *Circle as many as you wish.*

1 Agriculture (farming, animal science, etc.)
2 Architecture or urban studies
3 Art
4 Biology
5 Business and commerce
6 Communications or theatre arts (film, journalism, drama, acting, music, etc.)
7 Computer science
8 Education
9 Engineering
10 English or literature
11 Ethnic studies
12 Foreign language
13 Health or pre-med
14 History
15 Mathematics
16 Philosophy or religion
17 Physical science (chemistry, geology, physics, etc.)
18 Psychology or social science (sociology, political science, anthropology, etc.)
19 Other (please describe):

112-13

_____

_____

7. Which statement below comes closest to describing how close you are to knowing what you want to study or major in in college? *Circle <u>one</u> number.*

1 I have a definite idea of what I want to study
2 Fairly good idea
3 Some idea
4 Hardly any idea
5 No idea at all yet

PLEASE WRITE IN THAT SUBJECT: _____

114-16

Next are several questions about factors that may be important in getting admitted to college.

8. Based on the impressions you have formed or what you may have heard, how much importance do you think colleges you are likely to apply to generally place on each of these when evaluating students for admission?

How much importance do you think colleges place on . . . *Circle one number for each item:*	A Great Deal	A Fair Amount	Not Very Much	None At All	
Athletic accomplishments in high school	1	2	3	4	*117*
Extra-curricular activities like choir, band, orchestra, drama, clubs, etc.	1	2	3	4	
Grades or academic standing in high school	1	2	3	4	*119*
A family's ability to pay for their child's education	1	2	3	4	
The impression students are able to make during an interview with a representative of the college	1	2	3	4	*121*
Recommendations from teachers	1	2	3	4	
Recommendations from people other than teachers	1	2	3	4	*123*
Results of the SAT	1	2	3	4	
The academic reputation of the student's high school	1	2	3	4	*125*
Being a member of an ethnic minority	1	2	3	4	
Whether either parent went to a school to which a student is applying	1	2	3	4	
Whether the student lives in the state where the college is or outside it	1	2	3	4	*128*
Anything else that you think colleges regard as important in evaluating students (please describe) _____					*129*

9. How much importance do you think each of these factors <u>should have</u> in the minds of college admissions people when making decisions on whom to admit?

How much importance <u>should</u> colleges place on . . . *Circle <u>one</u> number for <u>each</u> item:*	Great Deal of Importance	Fair Amount of Importance	Not Very Much Importance	No Importance At All	
Athletic accomplishments in high school	1	2	3	4	*130*
Extra-curricular activities like choir, band, orchestra, drama, clubs, etc.	1	2	3	4	
Grades or academic standing in high school	1	2	3	4	*132*
A family's ability to pay for their child's education	1	2	3	4	
The impression students are able to make during an interview with a representative of the college	1	2	3	4	*134*
Recommendations from teachers	1	2	3	4	
Recommendations from people other than teachers	1	2	3	4	*136*
Results of the SAT	1	2	3	4	
The academic reputation of the student's high school	1	2	3	4	*138*
Being a member of an ethnic minority	1	2	3	4	
Whether either parent went to a school to which a student is applying	1	2	3	4	
Whether the student lives in the state where the college is or outside it	1	2	3	4	*141*
Anything else that you think should be important for colleges to consider (please describe) _____					*142*

_____

10. Suppose each one of these factors was being considered by colleges when they evaluate you, how do you think you would come out? *Answer even if you have to guess.*

Circle one number for each item:	One of my strong points; it would help me a lot	Would help me, but not as much as other things	Would not do me any good	
Your athletic accomplishments in high school	1	2	3	*143*
Your extra-curricular activities like choir, band, orchestra, drama, clubs, etc.	1	2	3	
Your grades or academic standing in high school	1	2	3	*145*
Your family's ability to pay for your education	1	2	3	
Your ability to make a good impression during an interview with a representative of the college	1	2	3	*147*
Your recommendations from teachers	1	2	3	
Your recommendations from people other than teachers	1	2	3	*149*
Your expected SAT results -- how well you think you will do on the SAT	1	2	3	
Your high school's academic reputation	1	2	3	
The ethnic group you belong to	1	2	3	*152*

Do you have any other strong points not covered above (please describe) *153*

_____

_____

You have acquired or seen a booklet called the Student Bulletin which contains information about the test, the registration form for the SAT, a Student Descriptive Questionnaire, and information about taking the SAT and about the report you will receive later. Some questions about the Student Bulletin follow.

11. The cover of the Student Bulletin is in the back of this questionnaire. Please look at it. It is the larger of the two enclosures. Do you remember this booklet? *Circle <u>one</u> number.*

1 Yes -- ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS
2 No -- SKIP TO QUESTION 22 ON PAGE 10

154

12. How much of the Student Bulletin have you read? *Circle <u>one</u> number.*

1 None -- SKIP TO QUESTION 22 ON PAGE 10
2 Skimmed through it
3 Read parts of it
4 Read most of it
5 Read all of it
6 I don't remember

} ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

155

13. Generally, what was your reaction to the Student Bulletin? *Circle <u>one</u> number.*

1 Very easy to understand
2 Fairly easy to understand
3 Fairly hard to understand
4 Very hard to understand

156

14. Did you have any problems in completing the registration form? *Circle <u>one</u> number.*

1 It was easy -- no problems
2 I had some problems
3 I had a lot of problems

157

14a. What kinds of problems, if any, did you have?

158-59

The following subjects were discussed in the Student Bulletin.

15. How well do you think you understand each of these subjects now?

I understand . . . *Circle one number for each item:*	Very Well	Fairly Well	Not Too Well	Not At All Well	Don't Remember Reading This	
What the SAT measures	1	2	3	4	5	*160*
What the Test of Standard Written English (TSWE) is	1	2	3	4	5	
How colleges use the SAT when considering students for admission	1	2	3	4	5	*162*
The purpose and use of the Student Descriptive Questionnaire	1	2	3	4	5	
The difference between Achievement Tests and the SAT	1	2	3	4	5	
What the Student Search Service does	1	2	3	4	5	*165*
What the College Scholarship Service is	1	2	3	4	5	
What you are expected to do at the test center when taking the SAT	1	2	3	4	5	*167*
What will be included in the report you will get on the SAT	1	2	3	4	5	
What the cumulative scoring report means	1	2	3	4	5	*169*
What to do if you decide you do not want your test results scored so that they will not be reported to anyone	1	2	3	4	5	
What to do if you need to correct some information you provided before you took the SAT	1	2	3	4	5	*171*

PLEASE TURN PAGE

180:1

16. On each of the subjects below, do you think the explanation you have received from the various College Board materials was completely honest, or do you think The College Board held something back?

Circle one number for each item:	Feel the information was completely honest	I think they held something back	I don't know	
What the SAT measures	1	2	3	*207*
How colleges use the SAT in the admissions process	1	2	3	
The purpose and use of the Student Descriptive Questionnaire	1	2	3	*209*
The purpose and use of the Test of Standard Written English (TSWE)	1	2	3	
How much good it does to study or prepare for the SAT	1	2	3	*211*
Whether you should guess or not when taking the SAT	1	2	3	*212*

17. The Student Bulletin contained the Student Descriptive Questionnaire (SDQ). This questionnaire asks for information about your interests, accomplishments, plans, and some background about your parents and family income. Did you complete the Student Descriptive Questionnaire? *Circle one number.*

1 Yes
2 No *213*
3 I don't remember

18. Could you explain your reasons for either filling the SDQ out or not doing so?

214-15

19. Some of the information on the SDQ goes to colleges you select along with your SAT scores. Please rate the following information, which you yourself provide on the SDQ, on whether you think it's all right for colleges to get this or whether they should not get it.

Circle one number for each item:	All right for colleges to get this	Colleges shouldn't get this information	
The kind of school you are attending -- public or private	1	2	*216*
Your course of study -- academic, general, vocational, etc.	1	2	
Your scholastic rank in high school	1	2	*218*
Number of years you study subjects like English, math, science, social studies in high school	1	2	
The grades you get in these subjects	1	2	*220*
Whether you work or not during your high school years	1	2	
Your participation in community or church groups	1	2	*222*
Scholastic honors or awards (honor societies, math prizes, essay contests, etc.)	1	2	
Your citizenship -- U. S. or foreign	1	2	*224*
Your ethnic background -- White, Black, Oriental, Puerto Rican, Indian, etc.	1	2	
Your sex	1	2	*226*
Your athletic activities in and out of high school	1	2	
Your extra-curricular activities other than sports	1	2	
How you think you compare with other students in such areas as acting ability, math, getting along with people, music, etc.	1	2	*229*

20. The information below, which you are asked to furnish on the SDQ, is used only for research by The College Board and does not go to colleges. Please rate each item on whether you think it's all right for The College Board to collect this information or whether they should not collect it.

Circle one number for each item:	All right for The College Board to collect this	The College Board should not collect this information	
Your parents educational achievements	1	2	*230*
Your estimate of your parents' income	1	2	*231*
How many people are dependent on your parents or guardian for financial support	1	2	*232*

21. Did you look through your own copy of the Student Bulletin when answering any of the questions on this questionnaire? *Circle one number.*

1 Yes, I looked at the Student Bulletin
2 No, I answered just from my memory of the Student Bulletin *233*

You should have received a booklet in the mail which tells you about the SAT and includes practice questions.

22. The cover of this booklet is in the back of the questionnaire. It is the smaller enclosure and it is entitled "About the SAT and The Test of Standard Written English." Please look at it. Did you get this booklet? *Circle one number.*

1 Yes -- ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS
2 No -- SKIP TO QUESTION 30 ON PAGE 11 *234*

23. How much of this booklet did you read? *Circle one number.*

1 None -- SKIP TO QUESTION 30 ON PAGE 11
2 Skimmed through it
3 Read parts of it
4 Read most of it
5 Read all of it
6 I don't remember
} ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS *235*

24. Generally, what was your reaction to this booklet? *Circle one number.*

1 Very easy to understand
2 Fairly easy to understand
3 Fairly hard to understand
4 Very hard to understand *236*

25. Do you think you have a better idea now as to what the SAT is all about than you did before you got this booklet, about the same or less of an understanding? *Circle one number.*

1 Have better idea
2 About the same as before
3 Less understanding

237

26. This booklet contains a set of practice questions on vocabulary, reading comprehension and mathematics. How many of these practice questions did you try to answer? *Circle one number.*

1 All of them
2 Most of them
3 About half of them
} ANSWER QUESTIONS 27 & 28

238

4 A few of them } GO TO QUESTION 29
5 None of them } GO TO QUESTION 29

27. Did completing these practice questions increase your confidence that you will be able to do well on the test, decrease your confidence, or make no difference at all in how you feel about taking the test? *Circle one number.*

1 Increased my confidence
2 Decreased my confidence
3 No difference

239

28. In terms of giving you a general understanding of what to expect on the SAT, how do you feel about the number of practice questions there were? *Circle one number.*

1 Too many of them
2 About the right number
3 Would have liked a few more questions
4 Nowhere near enough -- could have used a lot more questions

240

29. Did you look through your own copy of the booklet "About the SAT and Test of Standard Written English" when answering any of the above questions?

1 Yes, I looked at this booklet
2 No, I answered just from memory of the booklet

241

---

30. Summing it up, how do you feel right now about taking the SAT? *Circle one number.*

1 I feel pretty comfortable and relaxed
2 I feel a <u>little</u> nervous and anxious
3 I'm <u>quite</u> nervous and anxious

242

31. Any other thoughts or feelings you have about taking the SAT?

243-44

32. Suppose there were no SAT or similar tests that were part of the college admissions process -- no tests like these for you to take as one of the things you do when you apply to college. Do you think it would be a good idea or a poor idea to do away with tests like the SAT altogether?
Circle one number.

1 Good idea to get rid of tests like the SAT
2 Poor idea to get rid of them
3 Hard to decide

245

Why do you say that?

246-47

The following are background questions to be used when we summarize and tabulate the results.

33. Your sex:

1 Male
2 Female

248

34. Your present grade:

1 Senior in high school
2 Junior in high school
3 Other (please specify) _____

249

_____

35. Your most recent high school class rank:

1 Highest tenth ▷ top fifth
2 Second tenth
3 Second fifth
4 Middle fifth
5 Fourth fifth
6 Lowest fifth
7 I don't know

250

36. Your ethnic background:

1 American Indian
2 Black, Afro-American or Negro
3 Mexican American or Chicano
4 Puerto Rican
5 Oriental or Asian American
6 White or Caucasian
7 Other (please specify) _____

_____

251

37. What state do you live in? _____ _____ *252-53*

38. Highest level of education completed by the parent or guardian who has the most education:

1 Less than high school
2 High school
3 Business or trade school beyond high school
4 Some college
5 Bachelor's degree
6 Some graduate or professional school
7 Graduate or professional degree
8 I don't know

254

39. Approximate income of your parents before taxes last year:

1 Less than $5,000
2 $5,000 to $9,999
3 $10,000 to $14,999
4 $15,000 to $19,999
5 $20,000 to $24,999
6 $25,000 or more
7 I don't know

255

40. Have you taken the SAT before:

1 Yes
2 No

256

41. Did you ever take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT)?

1 Yes
2 No

257

PLEASE TURN PAGE

42. Please use the space below to tell us about any questions or issues related to the SAT that we did not ask you about, but should consider for future questionnaires, or any other final comments.

NOW PLEASE PUT YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE RESPONSE ANALYSIS ENVELOPE AND SIGN THE POSTCARD. MAIL THEM SEPARATELY TO RESPONSE ANALYSIS. NO POSTAGE IS NECESSARY.

280:2

FOLLOWING IS THE QUESTIONNAIRE USED TO SOLICIT

VIEWS OF STUDENTS AFTER TAKING THE SAT

Response Analysis

Research Park, Route 206
Princeton, New Jersey 08540
(609) 921-3333

December 1977

Dear High School Student:

As you know from the letter Dr. Marland, President of The College Board, sent you recently, you have been selected to participate in a survey conducted by Response Analysis for The College Board -- the sponsors of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) which you have just taken.

The purpose of this survey is to gather information which will help The College Board better serve the needs of students like yourself. Please fill this questionnaire out now, while the experience of taking the SAT is still fresh in your mind.

The questionnaire covers subjects like your reactions to and feelings about the test itself, and the administration of it.

Please complete the questionnaire now and then do two things:

1. Mail the questionnaire back in the self-addressed envelope to Response Analysis.

2. Put your name on the postcard and mail that back too. We will check your name off our list and not send you any reminders. Your anonymity is guaranteed because your postcard and questionnaire come in separately and cannot be linked.

I want to emphasize that no one will ever know how you as an individual responded. You do not identify yourself on the questionnaire. The analysis or review will consist of examining statistical patterns and results for the students who participate.

The survey is completely separate from the tests. That's why you mail it back to us at Response Analysis rather than to The College Board.

It is important that everyone in the sample participate. That's the only way we can be sure we get reliable results. If you have any questions, please call me collect: (609) 921-3333 any time between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

Sincerely,

Alfred Vogel

Alfred Vogel
Vice President

A few instructions before you begin:

Most questions are multiple choice, with a number in front of each of the possible answers. To show what you think, just draw a circle around the answer that comes closest to your opinion.

For example:

My favorite season of the year is . . .

1 Spring
2 Summer
(3) Fall
4 Winter

A few questions have blank spaces instead of answer numbers. Just complete these in your own words.

The numbers on the right side of each page are what we call column guides. They make it easier for the people who prepare these questionnaires for tabulating to do their work.

1. You signed up to take the SAT on Saturday, December 3. Did you take the test then? *Circle one number.*

   1 Yes, I took the SAT on December 3 -- ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS *107*

   2 No, I did not take it -- PLEASE DO NOT CONTINUE (MAIL YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE BACK TO US)

First, some questions about your experiences in taking the SAT.

2. What generally was your reaction to taking the SAT? *Circle one number.*

   1 I enjoyed taking it *108-109*
   2 I disliked taking it
   3 So, so -- I didn't have strong feelings of liking or disliking it
   4 Other (please describe)_____

   _____

3. The SAT test consisted of two basic parts -- a verbal section and a math section. In addition you took the Test of Standard Written English. Please rate these tests on how fair or unfair you thought they were as tests of your abilities.

Circle one number for each item:	Very Fair	Pretty Fair	Not Too Fair	Unfair	
The mathematics section of the SAT	1	2	3	4	*110*
The verbal section of the SAT	1	2	3	4	
The Test of Standard Written English	1	2	3	4	*112*

4. If you rated any of these tests "not too fair" or "unfair," can you explain or illustrate why you feel that way? Please do so in the appropriate spaces below.

   The mathematics section of the SAT_____ *113-114*

   _____

   The verbal section of the SAT_____ *115-116*

   _____

   The Test of Standard Written English_____ *117-118*

   _____

5. Now please rate each test on how difficult it was compared to how difficult you thought it would be.

Circle one number for each item:	Harder than I thought it would be	About as I expected	Easier than I thought it would be	
The mathematics section of the SAT	1	2	3	*119*
The verbal section of the SAT	1	2	3	
The Test of Standard Written English	1	2	3	*121*

6. The verbal section of the SAT had several kinds of questions. Please rate each kind on how fair or unfair you thought these questions were as tests of your verbal abilities in each area. The types of questions are illustrated.

Circle one number for each item:	Very Fair	Pretty Fair	Not Too Fair	Unfair	
Vocabulary questions in which you were asked to pick the opposite of the capitalized word. For example, GOOD: a) sour b) bad c) red d) hot e) ugly	1	2	3	4	*122*
Vocabulary questions in which you were asked to find the same relationship between two words as exists between two capitalized words. For example, YAWN: BOREDOM: a) dream: sleep b) anger: madness c) smile: amusement	1	2	3	4	*123*
Sentences in which you were asked to supply the missing word, such as: "Despite a --- of long-range remedies and stopgap efforts the problem of poverty continues to grow more desperate." a) paucity b) plethora c) famine	1	2	3	4	*124*
Reading passages consisting of paragraphs and questions testing how well you understood these paragraphs.	1	2	3	4	*125*

7. Which of these do you think best describes what the verbal part of the SAT test actually measures? *Circle one number.*

1 Your knowledge of English -- what you learned in school about this subject

2 Your verbal ability based on all you have learned about English whether in school or outside it

126-127

3 Other (please describe)_____

_____

8. Which of these do you think the verbal part of the SAT should measure? *Circle one number.*

1 Your knowledge of English -- what you learned in school about this subject

2 Your verbal ability based on all you have learned about English whether in school or outside it

128-129

3 Other (please describe)_____

_____

9. Which of these do you think best describes what the math part of the SAT test actually measures? *Circle one number.*

1 Mostly your knowledge of math -- what you learned in school about it

2 Mostly your ability to reason mathematically

130-131

3 About the same amount of both

4 Other (please specify)_____

_____

10. Which of these do you think the math part of the SAT should measure? *Circle one number.*

1 Mostly your knowledge of math -- what you learned in school about it

2 Mostly your ability to reason mathematically

132-133

3 About the same amount of both

4 Other (please specify)_____

_____

The next questions have to do with your experience at the test center.

11. Where did you take the test? *Circle one number.*

1 At the high school I attend -- GO TO QUESTION 15
2 At another high school
3 At a college or university } ANSWER QUESTIONS 12-14
4 Somewhere else

134

12. How convenient for you was the test center you signed up for? *Circle one number.*

1 Very convenient -- it was nearby or easy to get to
2 Fairly convenient
3 Not too convenient
4 Not at all convenient -- it was faraway or hard to get to

135

13. How hard was it for you to find the test center? *Circle one number.*

1 It was easy to find
2 I had a little difficulty finding it
3 I had a lot of difficulty finding it

136

14. How about the particular room where the test was held? *Circle one number.*

1 It was easy to find
2 I had a little difficulty finding it
3 I had a lot of difficulty finding it

137

15. How were you treated there by the people in charge? *Circle one number.*

1 They were friendly and courteous
2 They were businesslike and impersonal
3 They were rather mean and nasty

138

16. How clear were the instructions they gave you? *Circle one number.*

1 Very clear
2 Fairly clear
3 Not too clear
4 Not at all clear

139

17. How do you rate the physical conditions at the test center?

Circle one number for each item:	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	
The lighting	1	2	3	4	5	*140*
The temperature -- not too hot, not too cold	1	2	3	4	5	
Providing enough space for you to do your work	1	2	3	4	5	
Having readily available restrooms	1	2	3	4	5	*143*

Next, some questions about what you did before taking the tests.

18. What sorts of things, if any, did you do to prepare to take these tests? *Mark all that apply.*

1 I filled out the sample questions in the "About the SAT and Test of Standard Written English" booklet that I received with my admission ticket

2 I reviewed on my own some mathematics books from courses I've taken in school

3 I reviewed on my own some vocabulary books or other books on the English language

144-145

4 I reviewed on my own material from courses other than English or mathematics -- for example, history, social studies or sciences

5 I borrowed or purchased some books which tell you how to prepare for and take these tests, and I reviewed these test preparation books

6 I attended a review course or session given at the high school

7 I attended a coaching session given outside the high school where I paid a fee

8 Other things you did (please describe)_____

_____

9 I didn't do anything special to prepare for these tests -- GO TO QUESTION 21

19. Do you think what you did to prepare for these tests actually helped you do better on the tests or didn't this really help you much? *Circle one number.*

1 Helped me do better on the tests

2 Probably didn't help me do much better on the tests, but made me feel less anxious *146*

3 Probably didn't help me do much better on the tests, nor did it make me feel less anxious

20. About how long before you took the tests did you start your preparations for taking them? *Circle one number.*

1 A week or less
2 Two or three weeks before
3 Four or five weeks before *147*
4 More than five weeks before

Now some questions about the SAT scores, what they mean, and how they are used.

21. How much difference do you think low SAT scores make in an individual's ability to do college work? *Circle one number.*

1 Not much difference -- an individual who is really motivated to perform can do very well in college regardless of SAT scores

2 Some difference -- an individual who is really motivated to perform can do fairly well in college regardless of SAT scores *148*

3 A lot of difference -- an individual who does well on the SAT is much more likely to do well in college than one who does poorly on the SAT

22. Do you have any idea what kind of a score on the combined verbal and mathematics section of the SAT would satisfy you -- would make you feel you had done okay on the SAT? *Circle one number.*

1 Yes -- ANSWER QUESTION 23 *149*
2 No -- SKIP TO QUESTION 24

23. What kind of combined or total verbal and math score do you have in mind as a satisfactory or okay score? *Circle one number.*

1 Less than 700
2 700 to 799
3 800 to 899
4 900 to 999
5 1,000 to 1,099
6 1,100 to 1,199
7 1,200 to 1,299
8 1,300 or more

150

24. Suppose there were no SAT or similar tests that were part of the college admissions process -- no tests like these for you to take as one of the things you do to get admitted to college. Do you think this would be a good idea or a poor idea? *Circle one number.*

1 Good idea
2 Poor idea
3 Hard to decide

151

25. What are your impressions of how colleges are supposed to use the SAT scores? *Circle one number.*

1 To help make decisions on which students to admit to their schools
2 To help place students in an appropriate math or English course
3 Both of the above
4 Other (please describe)_____
_____
5 I don't know

152-153

26. What are your impressions of how colleges are supposed to use the Test of Standard Written English scores? *Circle one number.*

1 To help make decisions on which students to admit to their schools
2 To help place students in an appropriate English course
3 Both of the above
4 Other (please describe)_____
_____
5 I don't know

154-155

27. How much do you feel you know about the various kinds of financial aid that are available to help you pay for a college education? *Circle one number.*

1 As much as I need to know
2 I could use some more information
3 I could use a lot more information

156

28. In selecting a particular college to attend, how important a consideration to you is your ability to get financial aid (other than what your parents contribute)? *Circle one number.*

1 Very important -- couldn't attend unless I receive a great deal of financial aid
2 Somewhat important -- couldn't attend unless I receive some financial aid
3 Not too important -- I may need a small amount of financial aid
4 Not important at all -- I will not need financial aid

157

29. Below are some factors that might affect your choice of a college to attend. How important are each of these in your thinking?

Circle one number for each item:	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Too Important	Not At All Important	
That the cost of attending is reasonable	1	2	3	4	*158*
That the college is coeducational	1	2	3	4	
That the college has a good academic reputation	1	2	3	4	*160*
That the college has a good athletic reputation	1	2	3	4	
That the college has a good program in some course of study you are interested in	1	2	3	4	*162*
That the college has a good social reputation -- it's known as a place where you can enjoy yourself and get to know people as well as get an education	1	2	3	4	
That you know some kids who are going there or who have been there	1	2	3	4	*164*

29. cont'd.	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Too Important	Not At All Important	
That a friend or friends are thinking of going there	1	2	3	4	165
That your parents suggest you go there	1	2	3	4	
That teachers or counselors recommend it	1	2	3	4	167
That you think you have a good chance of getting in	1	2	3	4	
That the college is easy to get to -- not too far away	1	2	3	4	169

The following are background questions to be used when we summarize and tabulate the results.

30. Your sex:

1 Male
2 Female

170

31. Your present grade:

1 Senior in high school
2 Junior in high school
3 Other (please specify)_____

171

_____

32. Your most recent high school class rank:

1 Highest tenth ▷ top fifth
2 Second tenth
3 Second fifth
4 Middle fifth
5 Fourth fifth
6 Lowest fifth
7 I don't know

172

180:1

33. Your ethnic background:

1 American Indian
2 Black, Afro-American, or Negro
3 Mexican American or Chicano
4 Puerto Rican
5 Oriental or Asian American
6 White or Caucasian
7 Other (please specify)_____

_____

207

208-209

34. What state do you live in?_____

35. Highest level of education completed by the parent or guardian who has the most education:

1 Less than high school
2 High school
3 Business or trade school beyond high school
4 Some college
5 Bachelor's degree
6 Some graduate or professional school
7 Graduate or professional degree
8 I don't know

210

36. Approximate income of your parents before taxes last year:

1 Less than $5,000
2 $5,000 to $9,999
3 $10,000 to $14,999
4 $15,000 to $19,999
5 $20,000 to $24,999
6 $25,000 or more
7 I don't know

211

37. Have you taken the SAT before?

1 Yes
2 No

212

38. Did you ever take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT)?

1 Yes
2 No

213

39. Please use the space below to tell us about any questions or issues related to the SAT or Test of Standard Written English that we did not ask you about, but should consider for future questionnaires, or any other final comments.

NOW PLEASE PUT YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE RESPONSE ANALYSIS ENVELOPE AND SIGN THE POSTCARD. MAIL THEM SEPARATELY TO RESPONSE ANALYSIS. NO POSTAGE IS NECESSARY.

FOLLOWING IS THE QUESTIONNAIRE USED TO SOLICIT VIEWS OF STUDENTS AFTER THEY GOT THEIR SCORES

Response Analysis

Research Park, Route 206
Princeton, New Jersey 08540
(609) 921-3333

Dear High School Student:

As you know from the letter Dr. Marland, President of The College Board, sent you recently, you have been selected to participate in a survey conducted by Response Analysis for The College Board -- the sponsors of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), which you took about six weeks ago.

The purpose of this survey is to give us information which will help The College Board better serve the needs of students like yourself. The questionnaire covers your reactions on getting your scores, any difficulties you had in understanding the report, and some summary impressions of what you thought of the entire test-taking experience.

If you have received your scores on the SAT, please fill the questionnaire out right now. If not, wait until you get your scores, which should be shortly. After completing the questionnaire:

1. Mail it back in the self-addressed envelope to Response Analysis.

2. Put your name on the postcard and mail that back too. We will check your name off our lists and not send you any reminders. Your anonymity is guaranteed because your postcard and questionnaire come in separately and cannot be linked.

I want to emphasize that no one will ever know how you as an individual responded. You do not identify yourself on the questionnaire. Our analysis or review will consist of examining statistical patterns and results for the students who participate.

The survey is completely separate from the tests. That's why you mail it back to us at Response Analysis rather than to The College Board.

It is important that everyone in the sample participate. That's the only way we can be sure we have reliable results. If you have any questions, please call me collect at this number: (609) 921-3333 any time between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time.

Sincerely,

Alfred Vogel

Alfred Vogel
Vice President

A few instructions before you begin:

Most questions are multiple choice, with a number in front of each of the possible answers. To show what you think, just draw a circle around the answer that comes closest to your opinion.

For example:

My favorite season of the year is . . .

1 Spring
2 Summer
(3) Fall
4 Winter

A few questions have blank spaces instead of answer numbers. Just complete these in your own words.

The numbers on the right side of each page are what we call column guides. They make it easier for the people who prepare these questionnaires for tabulating to do their work.

1. You signed up to take the SAT on Saturday, December 3. Did you take the test then? *Circle one number.*

   1 Yes, I took the SAT on December 3 -- ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

   2 No, I did not take it -- PLEASE DO NOT CONTINUE (MAIL YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE BACK TO US) *107*

First some questions about your reactions to the scores you received on the tests.

2. How did your actual scores on each of these tests compare with what you expected to score?

Circle one number for each item:	I Did Better	I Did About As Well As I Expected	I Did Worse	
SAT verbal test	1	2	3	*108*
SAT math test	1	2	3	
Test of Standard Written English	1	2	3	*110*

3. Have your test scores caused you to change your mind about the kinds of schools you are considering applying to? *Circle one number.*

   1 Yes, I have set my sights higher -- am now considering colleges that are harder to get in

   2 Yes, I have set my sights lower -- am now considering colleges that are easier to get in *111*

   3 No change in the schools I'm considering

   4 Not applicable -- I'm already admitted to college

4. Have your SAT scores made you reconsider any other aspect of your plans for college or for what you want to do in life? If so, please describe.

112

113

Now some questions about the Score Report.

5. How well do you think you understand each of these scores that appear in the Score Report you received?

Circle one number for each item:	Very Well	Fairly Well	Not Too Well	Not At All Well	It Didn't Contain This	
Your SAT verbal score	1	2	3	4	5	*114*
Your SAT math score	1	2	3	4	5	
Your Test of Standard Written English score	1	2	3	4	5	*116*
Your Percentile rank on these tests in the national high school sample	1	2	3	4	5	
Your Percentile rank on these tests among college bound seniors	1	2	3	4	5	*118*
Your Percentile rank on these tests among enrolled freshmen in specified colleges	1	2	3	4	5	*119*

6. You received a booklet entitled "Your Student Report" along with the Score Report. How much of this booklet did you read? *Circle one number.*

1 None -- SKIP TO QUESTION 11
2 Skimmed through it
3 Read parts of it
4 Read most of it
5 Read all of it
} ANSWER QUESTIONS 7-10

120

7. How useful did you find this publication -- "Your Student Report" -- in helping you interpret and understand your Score Report? *Circle one number.*

1 Very useful
2 Fairly useful
3 Not too useful
4 Not useful at all

121

8. Regardless of how useful you found "Your Student Report," how easy to read and understand would you say it was? *Circle one number.*

1 Very easy to read
2 Fairly easy to read
3 Somewhat difficult to read
4 Very difficult to read

122

9. Were there any items on your Score Report that you did not fully understand even after reading "Your Student Report" booklet? *Circle one number.*

1 Yes
2 No *123*

10. If "yes," which items?

124

125

If you have your own Score Report handy, please get it and review it briefly. You will note that in addition to your scores on the SAT and Test of Standard Written English, this report contains information you gave on the Student Descriptive Questionnaire when you registered for the tests.

11. A copy of your Score Report is sent to any three colleges that you designate. Is there any other information you feel should be included on the report to help colleges know more about you? *Circle one number.*

1 Yes
2 No *126*

12. If "yes," what information do you have in mind?

127

128

13. You have gone through the whole experience of taking the SAT and TSWE tests. How do you sum up your feelings about this experience? (Please describe.)

129

130

14. Do you have any suggestions for improving the tests themselves, the procedures (registration, test-taking, etc.), or what The College Board tells you about the tests or test results?

a. Suggestions about the test itself:

131

132

b. Suggestions about the test-taking procedures:

133

134

c. Suggestions about what The College Board tells you about the tests or test results:

135

136

A couple of questions about your experiences in trying to select a college.

15. Are you having any problems or difficulties in deciding what specific colleges to consider? *Circle one number.*

1 Yes
2 No

137

16. If "yes," what are these problems or difficulties?

138

139

17. Suppose there were no SAT or similar tests that were part of the college admissions process -- no tests like these for you to take as one of the things you do to get admitted to college. Do you think it would be a good idea or a poor idea to do away with tests like the SAT altogether? *Circle one number.*

1 Good idea
2 Poor idea
3 Hard to decide

140

Why do you say that?

141

142

143

A few questions about any contacts you may have had with The College Board Admissions Testing Program.

18. Have you ever written or phoned The College Board to get an answer to some question or because you had some problem related to the SAT? *Circle one number.*

1 Yes, I've had some written or phone contacts with people at The College Board -- ANSWER QUESTIONS 19-21
2 No, I've had no contacts outside of registering for the SAT -- GO TO QUESTION 22

144

19. Please describe the nature of your contact with The College Board.

145

146

20. How were you treated by the people you contacted? *Circle one number.*

1 They were very courteous and friendly
2 They were businesslike and impersonal
3 They were rather sharp and discourteous

147

21. Was your question or problem resolved satisfactorily? *Circle one number.*

1 Yes
2 No *148*

22. Now a question about the fee for the SAT and TSWE.

The fee for the SAT and Test of Standard Written English is $7.25, and this fee includes the information you receive about the tests, scoring results, and providing reports for you, your high school, and colleges you designate: one for you, one for your high school, and three for colleges or scholarship sponsors.

How do you feel about this fee? *Circle one number.*

1 It's way too high
2 On balance, it seems fair and reasonable
3 Too low -- hard to see how you can do it for so little *149*

The following are background questions to use in analysis of the results.

23. Your sex:

1 Male
2 Female *150*

24. Your present grade:

1 Senior in high school
2 Junior in high school *151*
3 Other (please specify)_____

_____

25. Your most recent high school class rank:

1 Highest tenth ▷ top fifth
2 Second tenth
3 Second fifth
4 Middle fifth *152*
5 Fourth fifth
6 Lowest fifth
7 I don't know

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_____ 153

154

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5 Bachelor's degree
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156

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6 $25,000 or more
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157

30. Have you taken the SAT before?

1 Yes
2 No

158

31. Did you ever take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT)?

1 Yes
2 No

159

32. What was your score on the verbal part of the SAT test? Please write it in here

_____ 160

33. What was your score on the math part of the SAT test? Please write it in here 161

_____ 162

34. Please use the space below to tell us about any questions or issues related to the SAT that we did not ask you about, but should consider for future questionnaires, or any other final comments.

163

164

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180:1